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## ABSTRACT

The document contains the narrative portion of a multimedia project tracing the history of Jews in Michigan from the mid 17th to the mid 20th century. The developers intended that the materials be used as the basis of a one-month course of study. Overall objectives of the project were to increase understanding among students from junior high through adult education of how to use primary source documents, recognize the impact of geography on culture, and chronicle the historical development of Jews in Michigan. Specific objectives were to increase student knowledge of how Jews came to Michigan, assimilated and contributed to American cultural life, and developed separate cultural and religious institutions. The document is presented in four sections. Section I introduces the history of the project, outlines goals, and reviews field testing procedures. Section II itemizes major events and influences relating to Jewish immigration to North America and settlement in Michigan from 1761 to 1926. The final two sections present documentary inquiry packets relating to the Jews in Michigan for the periods 1640-1880 (section IV) and 1880-1940 (section V). Each section includes information on how to use primary documents: background; excerpts from documents such as trade petitions, family correspondence, and government publications; and questions. (DB)

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FINAL REPORT

A Multi-Media Presentation  
of the  
History of the Jews of Michigan:

Part I 1640- 1880

Part II 1880- 1940

Department of Health, Education and Welfare

Office of Education

Ethnic Studies Branch

Grant Number: G007701482

Project Number: 549AH70371

Project Director: Dr. Arthur Brown

Program Administrator: Dr. Gerald A. Teller

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION

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#### A. A HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

The stated goal of this grant was to create two multi-media slide-tape programs on the History of the Jews of Detroit from 1761-1928. A second goal was to develop a learning package of documents which would provide both teachers and students with direct access to the relevant historical documents of the period. A team was organized to accomplish these goals. Mr. Irving Katz was hired as the consultant to the project. Mr. Albert Karbal was brought in for his technical expertise. Dr. Gerald A. Teller was to create the material and provide the educational components.

An Advisory Council was developed consisting of the following members:

Dr. Arthur Brown, Professor of Philosophy of Education,  
Wayne State University, Project Director

Dr. Jay B. Stern, Superintendent, United Hebrew Schools of  
Metropolitan Detroit

Rabbi Robert Abrams, Head Master, Hillel Day School,  
Farmington, Michigan

Mr. Jim Smythe, Principal, Southfield-Lathrup High School,  
Southfield, Michigan

Mr. Richard Wagner, Principal, B'nai Moshe Branch,  
United Hebrew Schools

Mr. Irving Katz, Temple Beth-El, Bloomfield, Michigan

Cantor Arthur Asher, Principal, Temple Israel Religious School,  
Detroit, Michigan

Dr. Jean Fair, Professor of Teacher Education,  
Wayne State University

Executive sessions of the council were held September 8, 1977, October 13, 1977 and November 10, 1977. The Advisory Council suggested that the slide-tape presentation should be a motivational instrument which would develop an interest in the students to learn about the historical period. The documentary inquiry package should allow an in-depth examination of the period. The methodology would have the students confront the historical period by reading the primary documents, studying the lives of the major historical characters, and answer a series of questions that would be developed on each unit.

## B. DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM

The goals of the script was to be an historical narrative which would:

- a) Show how Jews came into America.
- b) Show how Jews came to Michigan
- c) Develop the history of Michigan and show how Jews integrated themselves into Michigan history.
- d) Show how Jewish institutions developed.
- e) Show how Jews assimilated themselves into American cultural life.
- f) Show the unique contribution of Jews to the American way of life.

Copies of the script are contained in Appendix A. The goals of the documentary inquiry package were to

- a) Introduce students to the use of primary documents
- b) Show the impact of geography on culture.
- c) Present great Jewish heroes.
- d) Chronicle the historical development of Jews in Michigan.

Copies of the Documentary Inquiry package are found in Appendix B.

A picture search was conducted to obtain the right pictorial images. An artist was hired to fill in the missing gaps. It was decided to utilize cartoon type art work.

## C. FIELD-TESTING

The program was field tested at Congregation Shaarey Zedek during the 1977-1978 school year. It was also tested at Akiva Hebrew Day School. The results of the field testing were very positive. A new series of slides was developed, documents were substituted and questions were defined. Students who participated in the course mastered the material and enjoyed the course. The student reaction was extremely positive. The results indicate that the course of study should last one month. The slide-tape show is presented and the documentary inquiry package is used. Each unit should be the subject of a 50 minute period of time. The program is most effective with a Junior High School to Adult audience.

**APPENDIX A**

## HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN DETROIT AND MICHIGAN

### Part I: 1761-1880

1. History of the Jews in Detroit and Michigan: 1761-1880.
2. Script by: Albert E. Karbal, Irving I. Katz, Rabbi Gerald A. Teller.
3. Narrated by Sandra Rubenstein, John Buckstaff.
4. Illustrated by H. C. Gaba-Drissman.
5. Produced by Albert E. Karbal.
6. This program was made possible by grants.
7. Jews were among the early settlers in North America.
8. In 1654, four men, six women, and thirteen young people of Dutch origin, who had fled from Recife, Brazil, in the face of threatened persecution by the Portugese, arrived in the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, on the Hudson.
9. There, in the small town that was later to become New York City, these twenty-three refugees founded the first Jewish community in what is now the United States.
10. By the time of the American Revolution, the number of Jews living in the thirteen colonies has been estimated at 2500 in a total population of about 2,500,000.
11. Almost all of them were merchants and the majority settled in the major towns along the Atlantic Seaboard.
12. It took more than 100 years before Jews ventured to Michigan.
13. Originally, Michigan was the home of several Indian tribes.
14. The first Europeans in the territory now known as Michigan came in the early 1600's, a little over 100 years after Columbus landed in America and about the same time as the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts.
15. The first Europeans who came to Michigan, were French missionaries, explorers, and soldiers. Bringing with them the civilization and language of their country, they laid claim to Michigan in the name of the King of France.
16. The French settlers established friendly relations with the different Indian tribes. They traded blankets, guns, and trinkets in exchange for furs.

17. Furs, in those days, were used to help keep people warm and to decorate the clothing of the rich.
18. In 1701, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac built Fort Pontchartrain de Detroit, on the Detroit River, and established a French outpost there.
19. During the 1700's, France and Great Britain began a long series of colonial wars. After sixty years of fighting, France lost her North American empire to the British. The conquest included Montreal and the Territory of Michigan.
20. With the end of the wars in 1760, Detroit passed into British hands and Fort Pontchartrain was renamed Fort Detroit.
21. Jews did not come to Michigan under the French. They started to enter Michigan during the British occupation.
22. During the war Jews served the British Army as supply men. Following the conquest of Canada, they remained in Montreal and became fur traders and merchants.
23. Fort Michilimackinack, recently restored in Mackinaw City, was a center of fur trade.
24. Ezekiel Solomon of Montreal came to Fort Michilimackinack in 1761 before the British troops occupied it to fur trade with the Indians.
25. For the next forty years he continued his trading operations in Michilimackinack and has the distinction of being the first Jew in Michigan.
26. Solomon, together with other traders, organized the Mackinac Company, believed to be the first example of a department store in North America. He was also one of the founders of the first Board of Trade in Michigan.
27. Another Jew from Montreal who settled in Michigan was Chapman Abraham. He came to Detroit in 1762 and remained there until his death in 1783. He was Detroit's first Jew.
28. Chapman Abraham gained the reputation as one of the most colorful fur traders and merchants of upper Canada.
29. Abraham's original first name in Germany was Kaufman, which means merchant. After moving to England, he changed his first name to Chapman, which means capman or merchant in Old English.
30. In 1763, the Indians, under Chief Pontiac, led a revolt against the British.
31. Among the traders captured by the Indians during this revolt were Ezekiel Solomon and Chapman Abraham.
32. Miraculously, both gained their freedom. Solomon was ransomed by the Montreal Jewish community.

33. According to one account, Abraham was exchanged for an Indian chief. Another account has it that he was tied to the stake by the Indians and was released because they considered his conduct as that of an insane person.
34. Throughout his life, though far from other Jews, Abraham remained loyal to the Jewish faith as a member of the Montreal synagogue.
35. With the advent of the Revolutionary War, Chapman Abraham maintained a loyalist position to the British crown. When he died in 1783, Detroit was still in British hands.
36. During the Revolutionary War, the British retained control over the Michigan Territory. The Treaty of Paris, in 1783, gave Michigan to the Americans, but the British did not give up this territory until thirteen years later.
37. When the American government established the Northwest Territory in 1787, Michigan became a part of it. The Territory of Michigan was made a separate government unit in 1805 and there followed a time of expansion and settlement.
38. Detroit, with a population of only a few hundred people, became the capital of the Michigan Territory.
39. During the War of 1812, Detroit and Mackinac Island were captured again by the British.
40. The peace treaty of 1814 restored Michigan to the Americans.
41. In 1837, Michigan became a state.
42. Beginning in the 1840's, German Jews began to arrive in Michigan in search of freedom. They left Germany because of persecution.
43. At first, most of them settled on the Atlantic Coast. But soon hundreds of immigrants with packs on their backs arrived to peddle in the areas of the Mid-west.
44. They were attracted to the Mid-west because many Mid-westerners had originally come from Germany and spoke German.
45. The Jewish peddlers, who later became merchants, went to Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Mackinac Island, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Marshall, Adrian, and Grand Rapids.
46. The German Jews were dedicated to their faith. Wherever enough Jews settled, they formed a synagogue.
47. The first private minyan in Michigan was held in Ann Arbor about 1845.
48. The first congregation was started in 1850, in Detroit by twelve German-Jewish families, when Detroit's population was 21,000.
49. This congregation, known as Beth El (House of God) was organized as an Orthodox synagogue.

50. Contrary to Orthodox tradition, Beth El introduced, in 1861, an organ and mixed choir into Sabbath services. This placed the congregation into the developing Reform movement.
51. A schism developed, resulting in the formation of Congregation Shaarey Zedek (Gates of Righteousness), a new Orthodox synagogue.
52. In 1857, Pisgah Lodge B'nai B'rith was formed in Detroit. This was the beginning of the formation of other fraternal, social, charitable, and cultural organizations.
53. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, 181 Jews of Michigan, out of a total Jewish population of about 750, joined the Union Army and fought for the freedom of all men.
54. Six Jewish soldiers in the Union Army were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery. They were:
55. Abraham Cohn.
56. Leopold Karpeles.
57. David Orbansky.
58. Benjamin B. Levey, Abraham Greenwald, and Henry Heller.
59. As Detroit grew, the Jewish population grew. From 12 families in 1850 (60 individuals), about 700 Jews lived in Detroit in 1880.
60. These German-Jewish peddlers assimilated into the American scene and some of them became leaders in the business world.
61. By 1880, Detroit had one Reform temple (Beth El) and four Orthodox congregations:
62. Shaarey Zedek.
63. B'nai Israel.
64. Beth Jacob and B'nai Jacob.
65. There were also two charitable organizations.
66. In addition, fraternal lodges of B'nai B'rith, Keshar shel Barzel, and Free Sons of Israel were established.
67. And one social club, the Phoenix, was opened.
68. By the time their persecuted brethren from Eastern Europe started coming to Detroit in large numbers, beginning with the pogroms in Russia in the 1880's, the German Jews were established and Americanized.

## HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN DETROIT AND MICHIGAN

### Part II: 1880-1926

1. History of the Jews in Detroit and Michigan: 1880-1926.
2. Script by: Albert E. Karbal, Irving I. Katz, Rabbi Gerald A. Teller.
3. Narrated by: Sandra Rubenstein, John Buckstaff.
4. Illustrated by: H. C. Gaba-Drissman.
5. Produced by: Albert E. Karbal.
6. This program was made possible by grants.
7. In 1880, the population of the United States numbered 50 million.
8. At that time, there were approximately 280,000 Jews in the country.
9. Between 1880 and 1924, the United States opened its doors to the oppressed peoples of the world.
10. The persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe took advantage of the liberal immigration policy of the United States.
11. In Eastern Europe, Jews faced pogroms and anti-Semitic discrimination at the hands of the Russians, Poles, Roumanians and the Austro-Hungarians.
12. America represented the hope and dream of the persecuted Jewish masses of Eastern Europe.
13. Almost 3 million Jews crossed the Atlantic Ocean to find refuge in the land of freedom. By 1925, the Jewish population grew from 280,000 in 1880 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million.
14. The road to America was not easy. The immigrants were forced to leave their homes and families.
15. They uprooted their lives and left their familiar surroundings, in search of freedom and prosperity in a strange and unknown land.
16. America was supposed to be the Golden Land, where money was found on trees and gold was in the streets. Unfortunately, the reality did not always match the dream.
17. The journey to America was long and difficult. Moreover, it was not easy to become a part of a strange, new culture, where people spoke a different language.
18. Yet, the Eastern European Jews slowly began to assimilate into the mainstream of American civilization.

19. They also retained their loyalty and ties to the Jewish tradition.
20. In 1880, Detroit's Jewish inhabitants numbered 665 in a total population of 116,340.
21. The developing industrialization in Detroit attracted thousands of Jews from both Eastern Europe and the United States.
22. The automobile industry attracted large numbers of immigrant workers, who were a source of cheap labor. Moreover, since Jews are predominately an urban people, they were attracted to cities rather than to farms.
23. Jews were so greatly attracted to Detroit, that by 1900 the Jewish population had increased from 665 in 1880 to 5,000, to 14,000 in 1910 and 40,000 in 1920.
24. The large influx of Jews over a short period of time created a problematic situation for the older German-Jewish establishment.
25. The German-Jewish community, made up of people who had arrived in Detroit in the 1840's and 1850's, were established and settled.
26. They spoke English and were engaged in business and commerce.
27. They had created their religious institutions, Temple Beth El, a Reform Temple,
28. and Congregation Shaarey Zedek, a traditional synagogue.
29. They were Americanized and did not feel comfortable either socially or religiously with the newcomers.
30. Yet, the more established German-Jewish community was willing to help their Eastern European brothers establish themselves.
31. The Eastern European Jewish masses located themselves primarily in the downtown Detroit area.
32. Hastings Street became the center of the new Jewish population.
33. They opened synagogues, shops, markets, bookstores and other small businesses.
34. The language of commerce and trade was Yiddish.
35. They organized their religious and social lives around Landsmanschaften, fellowship societies, and synagogues whose members came from the same country, city or village in Europe.
36. There was the Russian Synagogue, the Galician Synagogue, the Hungarian Synagogue, the Roumanian Synagogue, the Polish Synagogue, and other small places of worship. All of these synagogues were Orthodox.
37. As time passed and the Eastern European Jews became more assimilated into American life, these synagogues began to lose their original identity.

38. The Russian Synagogue became known as B'nai David,
39. the Galician Synagogue evolved into Beth Abraham and
40. the Hungarian Synagogue became B'nai Moshe.
41. Some of these synagogues also moved away from a position of strict Orthodoxy.
42. The education of the young has always been considered a sacred task by the Jewish community.
43. Rabbi Aaron Ashinsky continued the tradition by organizing a community Talmud Torah, an afternoon Hebrew School system, in 1892, but failed in his effort.
44. A second attempt in 1897 was led by Rabbi Yehudeh Leib Levin and the leaders of Congregation Shaarey Zedek
45. When the Talmud Torah Institute was opened.
46. In 1919, the United Hebrew Schools were formed under the leadership of Bernard Isaacs, a prominent Jewish educator.
47. The school opened with 600 students.
48. By 1923, the United Hebrew Schools had grown to 1700 children in four locations.
49. The Jewish educational needs were also provided by small private Hebrew Schools, Congregational schools, a National Radical School, whose language of instruction was Yiddish, a small Yeshiva, and melandim (private teachers).
50. Many of these schools were staffed largely by non-professional teachers who could not provide a meaningful Jewish education for the young Jewish American generation.
51. With the exception of the United Hebrew Schools and the congregational schools, Jewish education in the city of Detroit was far from adequate.
52. The social welfare needs of the ever-growing immigrant population became tremendous and the leaders of the more established Jewish community felt the need to centralize Detroit's charitable endeavors.
53. Leo M. Franklin, Rabbi of Temple Beth El, began the effort to organize a central philanthropic agency. On November 21, 1899, representatives from various charitable agencies met to form the United Jewish Charities.
54. The purpose of the United Jewish Charities was to centralize and more economically and efficiently administer the social welfare needs of the Jewish community.
55. The first president was David W. Simons, a prominent businessman and community leader.

56. By 1900, the health care needs of the Jewish poor were provided by a free clinic which later became the North End Clinic and is today the Shiffman Clinic of Sinai Hospital.
57. In 1902, the Fresh Air Society was formed to provide a summer experience for needy, urban children.
58. The Hannah Schloss Memorial Building, Detroit's first Jewish Community Center, later renamed
59. the Jewish Institute, provided a full range of activities.
60. There were classes in sewing, art, civics, history, stenography, reading, arithmetic,
61. physical culture, dancing and piano lessons.
62. There were also courses in American citizenship for adults and a self-help school for boys.
63. The Jewish community also provided an Orphan Home,
64. a home for the Aged, a Day Nursery,
65. A free burial association, a dental clinic,
66. A free loan association, a house of shelter and an employment bureau.
67. The personal needs of Jewish families were taken care of by the Jewish Social Service Bureau.
68. As Detroit's Jewish community grew and new situations developed, the Detroit Jewish community met the challenge by organizing in 1926
69. the Jewish Welfare Federation, a central fund raising agency for local and overseas needs, retaining the United Jewish Charities as a property holding agency.
70. The patterns of American Jewry were moulded by the influx of millions of Jews from Eastern Europe over a very short period of time.
71. These Jewish immigrants brought with them their rich Jewish heritage, as well as a deep love for freedom and democracy.
72. The Eastern European newcomers gradually assimilated into the fibre and fabric of the American civilization, yet they retained their unique cultural heritage.
73. They established new social, philanthropic, and religious institutions.
74. They advocated the cause of a national Jewish homeland and Zionism.
75. The Eastern European immigrants made a lasting impact on the American-Jewish landscape.

76. As the immigrant Jewish community matured, they were confronted with unforeseen historical circumstances of catastrophic dimensions, dealing with the survival of their brethren overseas.
77. Clouds of international darkness were gathering.
78. The American Jewish community was called upon to become the spokesman and the savior of persecuted Jewry.
79. The End.

**APPENDIX B**

A DOCUMENTARY INQUIRY PACKET  
FOR  
THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF MICHIGAN  
PART I

by  
MR. ALBERT KARBAL  
MR. IRVING KATZ  
DR. GERALD A. TELLER, EDITOR

## THE USE OF PRIMARY DOCUMENTS IN SOCIAL STUDIES UNITS

What is a historian? A historian is a social scientist who examines the past from a unique perspective. The historian analyzes facts, ideas and trends against their economic, social, religious and political backgrounds. The historian inquires into the events of the past.

A historian usually begins with three questions: What happened? How did it happen? Why did it happen? The historian begins to collect data, organizes it and then tests its validity. He may also utilize many other sister-sciences to discover truths about the past. Historians strive to make sense out of the facts and events of the past.

The historian distinguishes between primary and secondary documents. Primary documents tell you first hand about certain events. Secondary documents describe certain events. The Declaration of Independence is a primary document. While a book about the Declaration of Independence is a secondary document.

Documents should be read in class or at home. Children should be motivated to answer certain probe questions about the material. They should be allowed to "inquire" into the document and make some conclusions based on their reading of the document. Teachers should not prevent the students inquiry into the document by providing the conclusions before the document is read.

The students should feel as if they were historians looking at the documents for the first time. Students should be allowed to confront the past directly and not through the eyes of the teacher.

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UNIT I      SLIDES 1-12      THE SETTLEMENT OF JEWS IN NORTH AMERICA

The Settlement of the Jews in North  
America  
1654-1655

The first settlement of Jews in a group in North America was in what is today New York City. Early in September, 1654, twenty-three refugees arrived there on the French frigate, St. Charles. They had probably come from Dutch Brazil which had just been recaptured by the Portuguese. Although most of the newcomers were of Spanish or Portuguese origin, they were Dutch subjects.

That very month Peter Stuyvesant, the governor of the colony, dispatched to the West India Company a letter, dated September 22, 1654, expressing the desire of the Dutch colonists to expel these Jews. This letter is the first selection reprinted below.

The second selection, dated January, 1655, is a petition by the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam, Holland, requesting that the Dutch colonies in America be opened to Jewish trade and settlement. The granting of this petition by the West India Company prevented Stuyvesant from expelling the newly-arrived refugees. The third selection, dated April 26, 1655, is the answer of the West India Company to Stuyvesant's letter of September 22, 1654, and orders him to tolerate Jews in Manhattan.

The fourth selection is a description of the Jews in New York City in 1748 from the pen of Peter Kalm, a Swedish traveler. Jews were a novelty to him for there were very few Jews in Sweden at this time. This account was written originally in Swedish, the first three documents, in Dutch.

Probe Questions:

- a) What was Peter Stuyvesant's attitude to Jews?  
What was his stereotype of the Jews?
- b) Why do the Directors allow Jews to settle in North America? Was there economic pressure?
1. Stuyvesant's Attempt to Expel the Jews, September 22, 1654 -  
Jews: Extract from a certain letter from Director  
Peter Stuyvesant to the Amsterdam Chamber (of Directors)  
dated Manhattan, September 22, 1654.

(The Jews who have arrived would nearly all like to remain here, but learning that they (with their customary usury and deceitful trading with the Christians) were very repugnant to the inferior magistrates, as also to the people having the most affection for you;

the Deaconry (which takes care of the poor) also fearing that owing to their present indigence (due to the fact that they had been captured and robbed by pirates) they might become a charge in the coming winter, we have, for the benefit of this weak and newly developing place and the land in general, deemed it useful to require them in a friendly way to depart; praying also most seriously in this connection, for ourselves as also for the general community of your worships, that the deceitful race - such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ - be not allowed further to infect and trouble this new colony, to the detraction of your worships and the dissatisfaction of your worships' most affectionate subjects.

II. Amsterdam Jewry's Successful Intercession for the Manhattan Immigrants, January, 1655 - 1655, January Petition of the Jewish Nation.

(To the Honorable Lords, Directors of the Chartered West India Company, Chamber of the City of Amsterdam.

The merchants of the (Jewish) Portuguese nation residing in this City (of Amsterdam) respectfully remonstrate to your Honors that it has come to their knowledge that your Honors raise obstacles to the giving of permits or passports to the Portuguese Jews to travel and to go to reside in New Netherland, which if persisted in will result to the great disadvantage of the Jewish nation. It can also be of no advantage to the general Company but rather damaging.

Granted (February 15, 1655) that they may reside and traffic, provided they shall not become a charge upon the Deaconry or the Company.

There are many of the nation who have lost their possessions at Pernambuco and have arrived from there in great poverty, and part of them have been dispersed here and there. (Pernambuco, the stronghold of Dutch Brazil, was captured by the Portuguese, January, 1654.) So that your petitioners had to expend large sums of money for their necessities of life, and through lack of opportunity all cannot remain here (in Holland) to live. And as they cannot go to Spain or Portugal because of the Inquisition, a great part of the aforesaid people must in time be obliged to depart for other territories of their High Mightinesses the States-General (the national Dutch legislature) and their Companies, in order there, through their labor and efforts, to be able to exist under the protection of the administrators of your Honorable Directors, observing and obeying your Honor's orders and commands. (The West India Company owned the young Dutch colony of New Netherland.)

It is well known to your Honors that the Jewish nation in Brazil have at all times been faithful and have striven to guard and maintain that place, risking for that purpose their possessions and their blood. (The Jews distinguished themselves in the defense of Pernambuco, remaining there until its fall in 1654.)

Yonder land is extensive and spacious. The more loyal people that go to live there, the better it is in regard to the population of the country as in regard to the payment of various excises and taxes which may be imposed there, and in regard to the increase of trade, and also to the importation of all the necessaries that may be sent there.

Your Honors should also consider that the Honorable Lords, the Burgomasters of the City and the Honorable High Illustrious Mighty Lords, the States-General, have in political matters always protected and considered the Jewish nation as upon the same footing as all the inhabitants and burghers. Also it is conditioned in the treaty of perpetual peace with the King of Spain (the treaty of Munster, 1648) that the Jewish nation shall also enjoy the same liberty as all other inhabitants of these lands.

Your Honors should also please consider that many of the Jewish nation are principal shareholders in the (West India) Company. They having always striven their best for the Company, and many of their nation have lost immense and great capital in its shares and obligations. (The Company lost heavily through the capture of Brazil by the Portuguese.)

The Company has by a general resolution consented that those who wish to populate the Colony shall enjoy certain districts of land gratis. Why should now certain subjects of this State not be allowed to travel thither and live there? The French consent that the Portuguese Jews may traffic and live in Martinique, (Saint) Christopher, and others of their territories, whither also some have gone from here, as your Honors know. The English also consent at the present time that the Portuguese and Jewish nation may go from London and settle at Barbados, whither also some have gone. (Martinique, Saint Christopher, and Barbados are in the West Indies.)

As foreign nations consent that the Jewish nation may go to live and trade in their territories, how can your Honors forbid the same and refuse transportation to this Portuguese nation who reside here and have been settled here well on to about sixty years, many also being born here and confirmed burghers, and this to a land that needs people for its increase? (Jewish "New Christians" from Portugal had settled in Holland as early as 1593.)

Therefore the petitioners request, for the reasons given above (as also others which they omit to avoid prolixity), that your Honors be pleased not to exclude but to grant the Jewish nation passage to and residence in that country; otherwise this would result in a great prejudice to their reputation. Also that by an Apostille (marginal notation) and Act the Jewish nation be permitted, together with other inhabitants, to travel, live, and traffic there, and with them enjoy liberty on condition of contributing like others, etc. Which doing, etc. (The "apostille" is found in the margin on page 70.)

### III. The Answer of the West India Company to Stuyvesant, April 26, 1655.

Honorable, Prudent, Pious, Dear, Faithful (Stuyvesant) . . . .

We would have liked to effectuate and fulfill your wishes and request that the new territories should no more be allowed to be infected by people of the Jewish nation, for we foresee therefrom the same difficulties which you fear. But after having further weighed and considered the matter, we observe that this would be somewhat unreasonable and unfair, especially because of the considerable loss sustained by this nation, with others, in the taking of Brazil, as also because of the large amount of capital which they still have invested in the shares of this company. Therefore after many deliberations we have finally decided and resolved to apostille (to note in the margin) upon a certain petition presented by said Portuguese Jews (January, 1655) that these people may travel and trade to and in New Netherland and live and remain there, provided the poor among them shall not become a burden to the company or to the community (in the future poor Jews would not be supported by the Manhattan churches), but be supported by their own nation. You will now govern yourself accordingly . . . .

The Directors of the W(est) I(ndia) Co.  
Department of Amsterdam.

Amsterdam

26th of April, 1655.

Probe Questions:

- c) What did this observer see that distinguished the Jews?
- d) Describe different synagogue seating pattern.
- e) Are we beginning to see an assimilation of the Jewish population? In what areas?

### IV. The Jews of New York City, November 2, 1748

November the 2d. Besides the different sects of Christians, there are many Jews settled in New York, who possess great privileges. They have a synagogue and houses, and great country-seats of their own property, and are allowed to keep shops in town. They have likewise several ships, which they freight and send out with their own goods. In fine, they enjoy all the privileges common to the other inhabitants of this town and province.

During my residence at New York, this time, and in the next two years, I was frequently in company with Jews. I was informed, among other things, that these people never boiled any meat for themselves on Saturday,

but that they always did it the day before; and that in winter they kept a fire (going continuously) during the whole Saturday (for kindling fire anew on the Sabbath is prohibited by Jewish law). They commonly eat no pork; yet I have been told by several men of credit, that many of them (especially among the young Jews) when traveling, did not make the least difficulty about eating this, or any other meat that was put before them; even though they were in company with Christians.

I was in their synagogue last evening for the first time, and this day at noon I visited it again, and each time I was put into a particular seat, which was set apart for strangers or Christians. (This synagogue, Shearith Israel, was then on Mill (South William Street.) A young rabbi (Benjamin Pereira) read the divine service, which was partly in Hebrew, and partly in the rabbinical dialect (Aramaic). Both men and women were dressed entirely in the English fashion; the former had all of them their hats on, and did not once take them off during service. The galleries, I observed, were appropriated to the ladies, while the men sat below. During prayers, the men spread a white cloth (the praying shawl: the talit) over their heads, which perhaps is to represent sackcloth. But I observed that the wealthier sort of people had a much richer sort of cloth than the poorer ones. Many of the men had Hebrew books, in which they sang and read alternately. The Rabbi stood in the middle of the synagogue, and read with his face turned towards the east; he spoke, however, so fast, as to make it almost impossible for any one to understand what he said.

UNIT II

SLIDES 13-24

MICHIGAN HISTORY

This second unit deals with Michigan history. Read the brief history of Michigan and consider the following probe questions:

- a) What was the country of origin of the explorers who came to Michigan? Whom did they find here?
- b) Why were explorers interested in the territory of Michigan?
- c) Do you know anything about fur trading? Perhaps, you will want to consult an encyclopedia.
- d) How does Canadian history affect Michigan?
- e) Look at the blank map of Michigan. Can you guess where cities will develop?

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF MICHIGAN

by George S. May

Michigan's history is much older than many people realize. In the early 1600's, a little over a hundred years after Columbus discovered America, French explorers, missionaries and soldiers reached Michigan. At nearly the same time that Pilgrims were landing at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, in 1620, two Frenchmen were exploring the area around Sault Ste. Marie, nine hundred miles to the west.

From written documents we know a good deal about the French who came to Michigan. Unfortunately, we know much less concerning the different Indian tribes who lived in Michigan for thousands of years before the coming of the white man. Gradually, archaeologists are uncovering from Indian burial and camp grounds the materials that will help us to understand what Michigan's earliest residents were like and how they lived.

In the development of Michigan since the seventeenth century, the Potawatomi, Wyandot, Miami, Menominee, and especially the Chippewa and Ottawa Indians have played important roles. Many county, town and other place names remind us of the rich heritage which all of Michigan shares with its several thousand Indian citizens.

### The French Period

Because the French moved west through Canada along the Ottawa and French Rivers to Georgian Bay, Michigan's Upper Peninsula was the area on which they first set foot. Later, the French also came west through Lake Ontario and Lake Erie and then up along Michigan's lower peninsula. They established outposts at Sault Ste. Marie in 1668 and at St. Ignace in 1671. These are not only the oldest settlements in Michigan, but also in the entire Middle West. In lower Michigan the French maintained posts at various times at what is now St. Joseph, Port Huron, and Niles before Detroit was founded in 1701.

These early settlements usually contained both a stockaded fort and a Catholic mission, but the French valued them chiefly because they lay on the main fur trade routes. Michigan was one of the major sources of furs, especially beaver, which were in great demand in Europe. At posts at the Straits of Mackinac and on the St. Mary's, St. Joseph and Detroit Rivers French traders exchanged blankets, guns and assorted trinkets for furs brought in by Indians.

Partly because of a bitter rivalry over fur trade, France and Great Britain embarked on a long series of colonial wars that began in the last years of the seventeenth century. No battles took place in Michigan, but French-led bands of Michigan Indians actively engaged in fighting to the east. In the end, however, England was victorious; France lost her North American empire; and in 1760-61, Michigan passed into British control.

### The British Period

Many of Michigan's Indians, accustomed to dealing with the French, resented British rule. In 1763, led by the Ottawa chief, Pontiac, most of the western Indians rose up against the British in one of the bloodiest Indian wars in American history. In Michigan, Pontiac besieged Detroit for several months. Other Indians captured the two other British posts in Michigan, Fort S. Joseph at Niles and Fort Michilimackinac at Mackinaw City. But within a year Pontiac's uprising had been suppressed. The British regained control of Michigan and won the support of the area's Indians.

In order to prevent future Indian troubles and to protect the fur trade, the British prohibited further white settlement in Michigan and the surrounding territories. But American colonists along the Atlantic coast regarded western lands as future homesites for themselves or their children. They wanted Indian rights to these lands to be removed in order to permit settlement. These conflicting views were an important cause of the American Revolution.

During the American Revolution Indian parties from Detroit and Fort Michilimackinac raided American settlements far to the east and south as far as Kentucky. Fearing that Americans, led by George Rogers Clark, might retaliate and raid Michigan, the British at Detroit built a stronger fort, and at the Straits of Mackinac they moved their post from the mainland to Mackinac Island.

The Treaty of Paris in 1783 included the area that is now Michigan within the boundaries of the new United States of America. However, the British did not immediately surrender Michigan to the Americans, and their Indian allies in the Great Lakes region fought the Americans in a vain effort to keep them out. Finally, in 1796, the British turned their posts in Michigan over to American troops commanded by General Anthony Wayne, after whom Michigan's first county was named.

## The Territorial Period

### Detroit in 1836

Michigan was at first part of the Northwest Territory, established by the American government in 1787. The territory also included the future states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and the eastern part of Minnesota. When Ohio became a state in 1803, the rest of the old Northwest Territory became Indiana Territory. In 1803, Michigan's lower peninsula and the eastern portion of the Upper Peninsula were set aside as the new territory of Michigan. This marked the beginning of Michigan as a separate governmental unit. Later the territory was extended as far west as the Dakotas and Iowa.

President Thomas Jefferson appointed William Hull of Massachusetts as the territory's first governor. The capital of the territory was Detroit, which in 1805 was a town of only a few hundred people. Mackinac Island, Sault Ste. Marie, Frenchtown (today the city of Monroe) a few traders on the St. Joseph River and scattered farms from the Detroit River to the St. Clair River were the only other white settlements. Most of these few thousand residents were French speaking. Indians occupied the rest of the land. Beginning in 1807, the government negotiated treaties to acquire Indian lands and to open them to settlement.

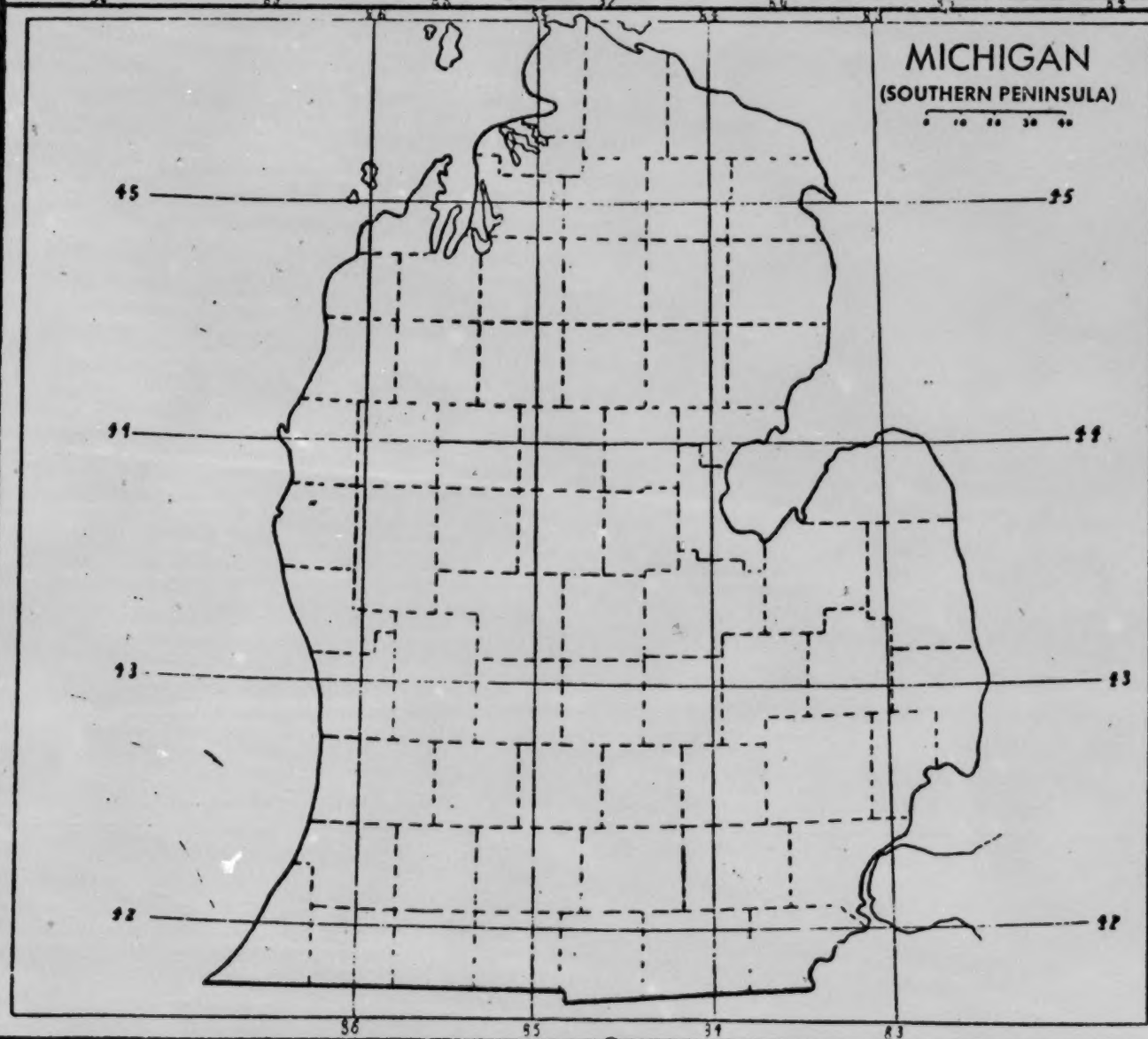
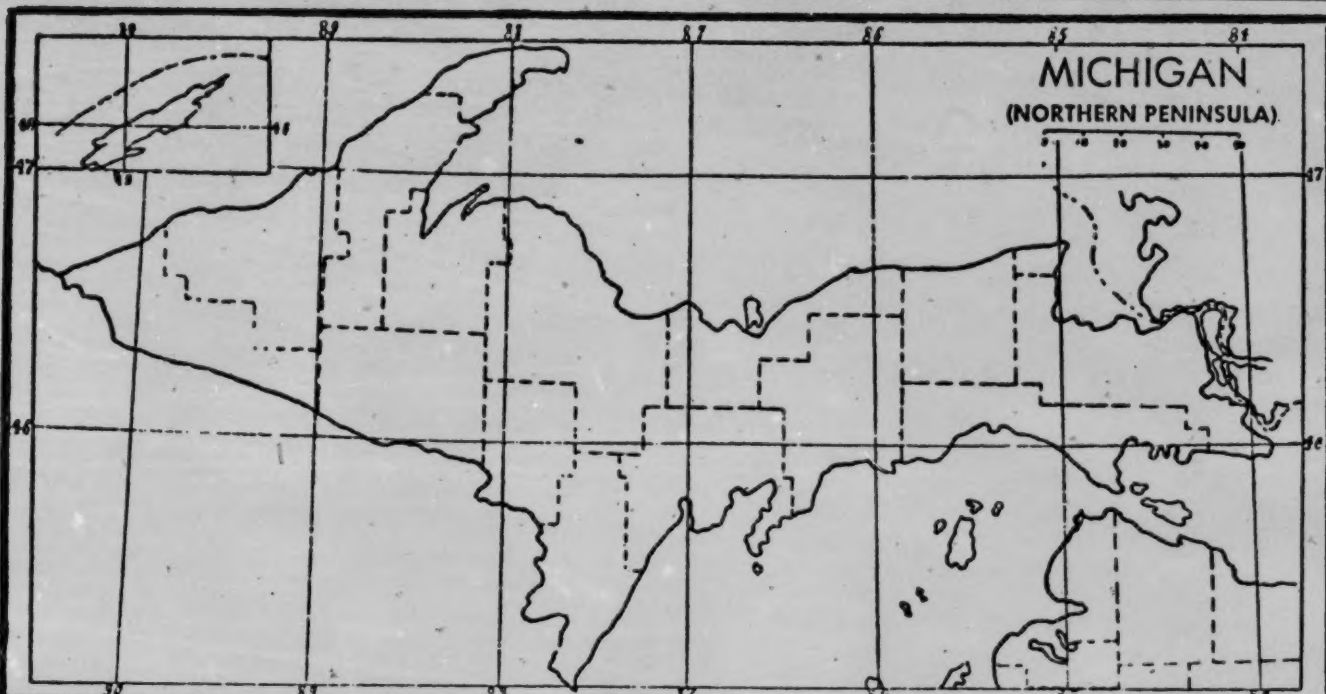
### War of 1812

When the War of 1812 began, British forces from Canada quickly compelled American garrisons on Mackinac Island and at Detroit to surrender. In January, 1813, an American attempt to retake Frenchtown on the River Raisin ended in defeat and an Indian massacre. Later that year the Americans drove the British out of Detroit and southeastern Michigan, but the British retained control of the rest of the territory until the end of the war. The peace treaty in 1814 restored all of Michigan to the United States. Permanent peace was established along the Canadian border. Threat of British or Indian attacks on Michigan ended.

Under its second territorial governor, Lewis Cass, who served from 1813 to 1831, Michigan developed rapidly. Pioneers, mostly from New York and New England, began settling in southern Michigan. As the population increased, county and township governments were organized. The present Wayne County dates from 1815. Within a few years, Mackinac, Monroe, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Lenawee counties had been organized, and by the 1830's settlement had stretched across the lower peninsula to Lake Michigan. So great was the interest in moving to the territory that people spoke of catching "Michigan fever." By 1835, there were 85,000 people in southern Michigan, compared with fewer than 4,000 residents thirty years earlier.

## Statehood

Believing that Michigan had now advanced beyond the territorial state, Michigan's citizens in 1835 drafted a state constitution. They elected as their first governor Stevens T. Mason who was twenty-four years old and had been acting governor of the territory and asked to be admitted to the Union. A dispute over the location of the state border with Ohio resulted in the Toledo War. No lives were lost, but Michigan's admission as a full fledged state was delayed until 1837. At that time Michigan agreed to give up its claim to Toledo in return for the western part of the Upper Peninsula. Detroit served as capital of the new state until 1847 when the seat of government moved to a more centrally located site at what is now Lansing.



UNIT III

SLIDES 25-36

EZEKIEL SOLOMON

THE FIRST JEW IN MICHIGAN

### Probe Questions

- a) Where is Fort Mackinac located? What was its purpose?
- b) What was the relationship between the Indians, the British and the French?
- c) Why did Ezekiel Solomon come to Michigan?
- d) Can you theorize why Ezekiel Solomon kept active in Congregation Shearith Israel?
- e) Did Ezekiel Solomon live a Jewish life?

THE BIOGRAPHY OF EZEKIEL SOLOMON  
by Irving Katz

It is doubtful whether any professing Jews lived as permanent settlers in New France (Canada) during its occupancy by the French. The Jewish settlement in Canada, of which present day Michigan was a part, began following the conquest by the British of Quebec (September, 1760). During the eighteenth century, the area that constitutes modern Michigan was physically and politically part of a sprawling Canadian wilderness. The fur traders who early exploited the vast territory had access to the East only by way of the river and lake routes. As a consequence, Michigan and Canadian history are for practical purposes of a single fabric until 1796. Only then did an international boundary effectively sever the unity of Michigan and Canada.

The Peace of 1763 brought an end to the Seven Years' War (French and Indian War) and to French rule in the New World. Canada, including what is now Michigan, passed into British hands. As early as 1760, however, Major Robert Rogers and a British garrison had captured control of Detroit, the French trading post and village established fifty-nine years before by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac. But formal British rule from 1763 to 1774 was to differ little from the original policies established by the French in the Canada-Michigan area. With passage of the Quebec Act in 1774, Michigan was officially attached to Canada by the British Crown.

In 1783, however, the treaty of peace, marking the end of the Revolutionary War, stipulated a new disposition for Michigan, that it be ceded to the new-born American republic. Yet, it was not until 1796 that the British relinquished their hold on American Northwest forts. For thirteen years, the Union Jack flew "illegally" over Michigan and during those years Canadian and Michigan history remained knit as one.

British inroads into Canada brought in their wake the first Jewish immigrants. Jewish migrants followed close on the heels of the British seizure of Quebec, Montreal, and Detroit. After 1760, Montreal was to become the commercial headquarters of Jewish traders. Detroit, established as Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit, was predominantly French Catholic when the British wrested it from French control. Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit simply became Fort Detroit. It was still the center of the Indian trade in the Northwest. But the stockade and village which to the Indians had symbolized French mastery over the territory now became the sign of British power. The infiltration of Anglo-Saxon influences into the heretofore French Catholic domain brought also the earliest Jewish settlers and commercial pioneers.

Among the first Jewish merchants who came to Montreal at the time of the British occupation were Ezekiel Solomon, Chapman Abraham, Levi Solomons, Benjamin Lyon, and Gershon Levi. They were business partners, engaged as commissaries of the British armies during the French and Indian War, the final contest between England and France for supremacy on the American continent, and the subsequent Indian War of 1763. They probably came together directly from England with the troops themselves and may have learned their trade as supply men to the armies of Europe. Quartermaster work was a common Jewish occupation on the European continent in the eighteenth century; an arduous but often lucrative trade. The partners had their own limited resources, some financial support back in England, and possibly the help of Hayman Levy, the well-known colonial trader of New York. After the conquest of Canada the partners branched out into the expanding fur trade.

Fort Michilimackinac (Mackinac) was one of the most important of the early posts on the Great Lakes. This northern Michigan Fort was a key military bastion and fur trading center for three quarters of a century. Built by the French in 1715 it guarded the Straits until it was abandoned in 1781 during the American Revolution. It was located on the sandy south side of the Straits near the tip of Michigan's lower peninsula, and was the principal fort north of Detroit. It oversaw the commerce of three lakes and served as a meeting place for the nearby Chippewa and Ottawa Indian tribes. The French occupied the Fort until the autumn of 1760, when its Commandant, Captain Louis de Beaujeu, abandoned it to the victorious British forces. British troops did not arrive, however, to take possession of their prize until a year later on September 28, 1761 (in the interval, the fort was occupied by bush-ranging French traders, most of them half-breeds). For the next twenty years, Michilimackinac witnessed the golden age of Indian fur trading.

Ezekiel Solomon and a few hardy traders came to Michilimackinac in the summer of 1761 in advance of the English troops, in order to pre-empt some of the rich northern fur trade. So that they might win over the Chippewa Indians to their side, the English traders distributed presents to them and succeeded in winning their friendship. But no sooner had they become friendly with the Chippewas than a band of nearby Ottawas presented demands and threatened destruction of the group. Fortunately Captain Henry Balfour, Lieutenant William Leslye and a garrison of British soldiers arrived in time to rescue the traders, including Ezekiel Solomon, from the impending peril. Solomon continued his trading business in Mackinac and so became the first known Jewish settler in Michigan. A native of Berlin, Germany, he was the brother of Esther Solomon, who married Moses Hart, a brother of Aaron Hart, the foremost Jewish settler in Canada at the

time of the British occupation in 1760 and the founder of the prominent Jewish Canadian family of that name. He was also the cousin of Levi Solomon, his business partner and a prominent Jewish pioneer of Canada.

Ezekiel Solomon and three of his partners went through the horrors of the general Indian uprising of 1763, generally known as "Pontiac's Conspiracy," and shared the common experience of an Indian captivity with its imminent threat of death by torture. Most of the Indian leaders realized that once the English settlers began pouring across the Allegheny Mountains, hunting and trapping would be threatened and the Indians themselves would have to move out.

Indian resentment of British officials and unscrupulous traders was further heightened by the incitements of a bitter French population. The Indians rose in a great effort to end the influx of English settlers and soldiery. Significantly enough, the Indian Uprising was not directed against the French. The Indians were quite aware of many of the advantages offered to them by the fur trade with white settlers.

According to Chief Pontiac's plan, a simultaneous attack was to have been launched on all the forts in the possession of the British and the garrisons annihilated in one stroke. At Mackinac, the scheme was to engage in a game of ball, at the exciting stage of which the ball was to be tossed, presumably by accident, within the fort, whither the warriors were to rush after it, only to seize the weapons which their squaws, by prearrangement, had taken into the fort, hidden under their blankets. The scheme was carried out successfully on June 2, 1763.

Solomon was taken prisoner by the Indians and was one of the few Englishmen, military or civilian, to remain alive. According to Alexander Henry, traveler and trader, he was later taken to Montreal by the Ottawas and ransomed by the Jewish Community.

From the time of the British conquest until 1764, Canada was under the government of the military, who ruled with a high hand. Typical of the experiences of civilians under such rule was that of Thomas Walker, an Englishman who had come to Canada about 1763. In 1764, while he was a justice of the peace in Montreal, soldiers broke into his home, brutally assaulted him, and cut off one of his ears. The civilian population, greatly exercised by this outrage, appealed to Governor James Murray for redress. Among the responsible signers of the petition was Ezekiel Solomon, who very probably signed not only for himself but also for his Jewish associates.

The fur trade was a hazardous industry. Most of the Indian goods had to be transported all the way from London to the warehouses on the St. Lawrence River. Marine insurance was expensive and not always easy to secure. Once the trade supplies arrived, the canoes were loaded and sent to the Upper Country, risking the dangers of pioneer travel, rivers, rapids and difficult portages. Frequently the Indians had to be "carried on the backs" for a season or two before the furs came in. Then came the arduous task of carrying the skins back to settlements and of transporting them to the European market. It was not unusual for a merchant in England to wait two, if not three, years for the arrival of the bale of furs which was to compensate him for his advances. When the furs finally arrived he was never certain that the public wanted his merchandise or that they could afford his luxury product at that particular time. Added to these normal difficulties was the looting, in 1763, of the merchants' stocks. Outstanding debts owed by Indians for preceding seasons were hardly collectible. The Pontiac War ravaged the frontier for over a year and it was not until July, 1766, that a peace treaty was finally signed between the British and the Indians.

Despite the obstacles which stood between the commercial pioneer and the realization of profit, competition among merchants grew sharper as American traders from New York and Pennsylvania began to invade the western frontiers. Working out of Lancaster and Philadelphia, these eastern traders, a number of whom were Jews, penetrated the Ohio and Mississippi River basins as far west as the Illinois country. There, with increasing frequency, they began to cross paths with their competitors, the Canadian fur packs inching north toward the trading posts and ports of the Great Lakes. American and Canadian traders bore similar difficulties in the struggle against distance, nature and Indians, but the Canadian merchants labored under several additional burdens - the three per cent tariff on imports and another three per cent on furs exported. Not until 1769 were these taxes lifted. American traders in these years held an advantage in their freedom from any such tax load. Even the new licenses issued to Canadian fur traders after 1769 preserved a number of severe restrictions. But until 1769, Montreal and Quebec merchants were particularly hard-pressed.

Solomon and his partners were no exceptions, and in 1768 they confessed they were unable to meet their financial obligations. They offered to make a settlement, surrendering all their property, and most of the creditors were willing even though the assets would not have yielded more than seven shillings in the pound. However, when other creditors would entertain no thought of such an arrangement, the debtors, on the advice of Attorney General Francis Maseres, presented a joint petition to Governor Guy Carleton asking for some sort of financial arrangement, or the appointment of a commission of bankruptcy

which would be authorized to divide the remaining assets equally among the creditors.

On July 23, 1769, Solomon was married in Montreal to Louise Dubois, a French-Canadian girl. Despite his marriage to a Christian, he was an active member of Montreal's Sephardic (using the Spanish-Portuguese ritual of worship) Congregation Shearith Israel, founded in 1768. In the Minutes of this Congregation of the 25th of Elul, 5538 (September, 1778) it is recorded that Ezekiel Solomon and Levy Michaels were selected for the high religious honors of Hatan Torah and Hatan Breshit: "bridegroom of the law and bridegroom of the beginning". These men were given the honor of closing and beginning the annual cycle of the Pentateuchal readings in the synagogue on Simchat Torah, the concluding day of Succot (Feast of Tabernacles).

On November 30 of the same year Solomon petitioned the members of the congregation to bury his baptized, uncircumcised son in the Jewish cemetery. This was contrary to Jewish law, but, mindful of the fact that Solomon was an active and important member of the congregation, they assented. However, at the same meeting, a resolution was passed unanimously that in the future no man or boy should be buried according to the rules and customs of Jews unless he has already been circumcised.

A month later, Solomon was elected a member of an executive committee of three to assist the parnass (president) and gaboy (treasurer) in the drafting of the first Constitution of the congregation, which was adopted by the members on December 22, 1778. He also contributed toward the purchase of a Torah (Scroll) of the Law). In 1779, he was elected a member of the Mahamad (board of directors).

Despite the Indian disturbances of 1761 and 1763, Solomon decided to resume his trading enterprises in the Northwest. Mackinac became his center of operations.

It is of some interest to note what Solomon brought with him from Montreal and Quebec to Mackinac. From an invoice of one of his expeditions, in 1770, we are in a position to know in detail the nature of his cargo. On this particular trip he came up with two "canoes." There were sixteen French Canadians in his crew; he was the only literate man among them. There were in the cargo 28 bales of dry goods: blankets, cotton goods, linens, and the like; 2 sacks of flour; 4 bales and 1 "role" of tobacco; 4 boxes of iron ware containing brass and copper kettles, and, no doubt, an assortment of knives, needles, axes, etc; 24 Indian guns, 600 pounds of gunpowder and 1,000 pounds of shot and ball. So much of the solids. In addition, there were 256 gallons of rum and brandy, and 64 gallons of wine. The whole cargo, an 18 months supply of "sundry goods", was valued at 750 English pounds.

Before the men who took this load west to Mackinac set forth, all seventeen were called in by an officer of the Crown and asked to take an oath of loyalty to King George and to promise most solemnly that they would engage in no political intrigue with the Indians. Solomon was also required to post bond of almost double the value of his wares as assurance that he would scrupulously observe all prohibitions governing relations with the Indians.

This rigid supervision of the Indian trade by the Crown authorities after 1763 was in part a justified reaction to the abuses of individual traders who had taken advantage of the rather naive savages. In its large sense, the detailed control of the fur trade by the British authorities was part of the new colonial policy to integrate governmental activities in all North America, to tie the colonies closer to the mother country, both commercially and administratively, and to compel the American provinces to accept a fair share of the financial burdens incurred on their behalf.

In 1773 and 1774, Solomon's name appears on a petition of the residents of Montreal and Quebec to the King of England for a house of assembly for Canada. This action reflects the desire for greater "home rule in Canada" which was to flare up shortly in rebellion directed against the Crown by the thirteen American colonies to the south.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, Solomon remained, however, a staunch supporter of the British regime.

Solomon's business activities were quite extensive. In 1770, he was among the fourteen English traders who were granted licenses to exploit the fur trade in what is now the state of Wisconsin. In 1777 he went up to Mackinac with a passport from the military authorities at Quebec which, said the letter of transmittal, "was granted him in consideration of his creditors." Some of his furs must have come from as far west as the foothills of the Rockies, for in 1778 he and his partner, Grant, sent a load of supplies to strategic Lake Nipigon, west of Lake Superior. There they could siphon out furs from the backyard of the Hudson's Bay Company to the east, and at the same time barter for the beaver that came down the Saskatchewan River from the distant west.

More and more, as Solomon and his friends reached out for furs, it became evident that this could not be a simple or one-man enterprise. As early as 1761, some of the graders, dealing in Saskatchewan River furs, had made an agreement to work co-operatively. They pooled their stocks and divided the profits, the furs. Co-operation was desirable and necessary because of the heavy expense of doing business, because of the dangers of competition and price-cutting, and because of the obvious advantages of monopolistic control and price-fixing. When the Revolutionary War broke out in 1775, the British authorities encouraged the creation of a "general store"

or co-operative centralized enterprise. It was easier to watch one company than twenty-five or thirty and thus to cut down the smuggling of much needed supplies into the United States, where there was a ready market for English manufacture and consumer goods.

Accordingly, the commandant at Mackinac, in June and July, 1779, encouraged a group of about thirty traders and companies, operating in that area, to form a loose trading partnership, something like the usual shipping "adventure", in which several persons were "concerned". Under the terms of the twenty-article agreement, which was to run for about a year, the traders created a single store, fore-bore to trade privately, and agreed to split the profits in proportion to the stock thrown into the common pot. Ezekiel Solomon was a member of this Mackinac Company, believed to be the first example of a department store operation in the United States.

Despite his business activities, Solomon was still struggling to emerge from the morass of debt into which the Indian uprising of 1763 had plunged him, and the reverses which he encountered during the Revolutionary War. He finally entered bankruptcy in 1780. But even though he was pressed financially, he managed to continue his business as a trader in Mackinac.

Mackinac was a French Catholic town, and in 1778, the people there wanted a missionary priest. But a missionary required money to live. Accordingly, a subscription list was sent around and some time later Ezekiel Solomon obligated himself for the sum of 50 livres, a generous amount in those days, as a gesture of goodwill.

In 1784, Solomon joined other traders in creating a committee of eight to regulate the trade of Mackinac and "dependencies", the first "Board of Trade" in Michigan formally organized of which there is any record. The reason for the formation of this Board of Trade was the resumption of hostilities between the Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior and the Fox and Nadowessieux Indians in the Menominee region. In wartime, the Indians were restricted in hunting, and the supply of furs was reduced to the smallest proportions. The traders had, therefore, incentive enough to work in concert and promote peace. This was a year after the close of the Revolution, the treaty of peace having been signed in Paris, September 3, 1783. But the English did not evacuate Mackinac until 1796.

In 1785 Solomon purchased property on Mackinac Island (now owned by Stewart Woodfill) and opened an establishment. After the Revolution, the trade in the north was largely in the hands of the Northwest Company, formed in 1783. Headquarters were on Mackinac Island, adjacent to the fort, which had been moved to the Island from the lower Peninsula side of the Straits during the Revolution.

In 1786, Solomon's name appeared among a list of "traders to the Upper Country, trading to the Grand Portage," which was located at the northwest end of Lake Superior, about thirty miles west of the Kaministiquia River. It was selected by the English as early as 1765 because of its easy access to the Indians of the Northwest with whom a most profitable trade arose. Out of this early trade grew the famous Northwest Company.

Clarence M. Burton, the noted historian, lists Solomon as a resident of Detroit in 1789. This is rather doubtful. An examination of the Askin accounts, the source Burton used, discloses several small purchases by Solomon from John Askin, one of the most important Detroit merchants at that time. Askin was located at Mackinac prior to and during a part of the Revolution and Solomon was acquainted with him. When Askin moved to Detroit, Solomon continued his business contacts with him on a small scale and he may have even made a business trip to Detroit, but, judging from the few entries in the Askin accounts, it is highly improbable that Solomon was a resident of Detroit.

In the hearings on land claims in Michigan Territory, conducted in Detroit on April 13, 1808, there is presented a "claim to the widow and heirs of the late Ezekiel Solomon to a lot of ground at Michilimackinac which had been entered with the former commissioner of the land office at Detroit in Volume 1, page 464, under date of December 24, 1805." From this entry it would appear that Solomon died between 1805 and 1808, after a residence in Mackinac for at least forty-five years.

UNIT IV

SLIDES 37-49

IMPORTANT DATES IN MICHIGAN JEWISH HISTORY

#### PROBE QUESTIONS

- a) Why did Jews tend to settle in Ann Arbor first?
- b) Why did they choose to settle in larger cities?
- c) Can you make any sense out of the patterns of Jewish settlement?
- d) Using the blank map, trace the settlement of Jews in Michigan.

### Some Important Dates in Michigan Jewish History

- 1761 Summer Ezekiel Solomon of Montreal arrived in Fort Michilimackinac (Mackinac), the most important Fort and fur trading post north of Detroit, and became the first known Jewish settler in what is today the State of Michigan. A few months later, Solomon narrowly escaped captivity by a band of Ottawa Indians.
- 1762 Chapman Abraham, an English Jew, arrived in Detroit and became the first known Jewish settler in the Village.
- 1805 Michigan territory established.
- 1837 First Directory of the City of Detroit was published. No known Jews appeared therein.
- 1842 German born Jacob Hirsch was the first Jew to settle in Jackson.
- 1843 Solomon Weil, a German Jew, arrived in Ann Arbor. He was followed by his brother Moses (1844) Leopold (1845) Marcus (1846) Jacob (1848) and his parents, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Weil (1850). The first Minyon (private religious service) in Michigan was held in 1845 in the residence of Leopold, Weil and his brother-in-law, Judah Sittig, who came to Ann Arbor in 1845. The first Jewish cemetery in Michigan was established in Ann Arbor in 1848 or 1849.
- 1844 Charles E. Bresler and Edward Kanter, both immigrants from Germany, were residents of Detroit. Bresler came to Ypsilanti, possibly in the late 1830's. Kanter went to Mackinac but returned to Detroit in 1852. He was the first Michigan Jew to serve in the State Legislature (1857) and he became the first Michigan-Jewish banker by organizing the German-American Bank. Kanter Street in Detroit is named after him. Mannes Israel of Waldeck, Germany, settled in Kalamazoo, starting a general store. Solomon and Andrew Freedman settled in Adrian. They later moved to Detroit.
- 1848 Samuel and Marx Hart, natives of South Germany, arrived in Marshall. Louis Freidenberg and Solomon Meyerfeld settled in Monroe (originally Frenchtown).
- 1849 Charles, Henry and Emanuel Lederer, natives of Bohemia, settled in Lansing. They came originally to Ann Arbor in 1847.

1850

Detroit's population numbered 21,019. The Detroit City Directory contained the names of the following Jews and their businesses: A. Amberg and Company, merchant tailors; S & H Bendit and Company, Dry Goods; F.E. Cohen, Portrait Painter; Solomon Cohen, Peddler; S. Freedman and Brothers, Dry Goods Dealers; Alexander Greenwald, Clothing Store; Joseph Greenwald, Adam Hersch, Firm of Silberman and Hersch; Leopold Pappenheimer, Fancy Store; Silberman and Hersch, Cigar Manufacturers; Jacob Silberman, Firm of Silberman and Hersch.

1852

Julius Houseman became the first Jewish settler in Grand Rapids. He later served as Mayor of Grand Rapids and as a member of Congress. The first Michigan Jew to hold the office of Mayor and the only Michigan Jew to this day to have been elected to the House of Representatives.

### Facts About Michigan Jewry

Michigan, one of the north central states of the U.S.A. with a population of 8,374,000 including 97,995 Jews, of whom 84,500 are in METROPOLITAN DETROIT.

Ann Arbor (2,000 Jews) was the first community where a colony of Jews settled in the 1840's during the German-Jewish immigration. The first to arrive were the Weil brothers (Solomon, Moses, Leopold, Marcus and Jacob) and their parents. The first services were held in 1845 and the first private cemetery acquired about 1848 (originally located in what is now downtown Ann Arbor, the cemetery was condemned by the city and the remains of the interred transferred to the Jewish section in Forest Hill Cemetery). By 1873, the last of the Weil brothers moved to Chicago.

Jacob Hirsch and Jacob Levy came to Jackson (200 Jews) in 1842. The Hebrew Benevolent Association was formed in 1858 and a cemetery purchased. Temple Beth Israel (reform) began in 1862. Maurice Heuman served as Mayor of Jackson.

Mannes Israel arrived in Kalamazoo (700 Jews) in 1844. His son, Edward, was the astronomer of General A.W. Greenley's Arctic Expedition of 1881. Congregation B'nai Israel (reform) started in 1865 and Congregation of Moses (conservative) in 1886. Samuel Folz served as Mayor and Postmaster of Kalamazoo.

Charles, Henry and Emanuel Lederer were in Lansing (850) Jews, Michigan's capital, in 1849. Mount Hope Cemetery was acquired in 1898. Congregation Shaarey Zedek (reform) was founded in 1912 and the Jewish Welfare Federation in 1939.

Julius Houseman came to Grand Rapids (1300 Jews) in 1852. He was Mayor of Grand Rapids and a member of Congress, the first and only Michigan Jew to this day to have been elected a U.S. Congressman. His son-in-law, David Amerberg, served in the Civil War, and his grandson, Julius Amberg, served in the Navy in World War I and as an Assistant Secretary of War in World War II. In 1857, a Hebrew Benevolent and Burial Society was organized and a cemetery purchased. Temple Emanuel (reform) was incorporated in 1871 and Congregation Ahavas Israel (conservative), a merger of two orthodox congregations, was formed in 1938. The Jewish Community Fund began in 1940.

Bay City has 700 Jews. Congregation Anshe Chesed was organized in 1872 and Congregation Shaarey Zedek in 1880. The Jewish Community is presently served by Temple Israel (conservative), successor to Temple Abraham, organized in 1914. The Northwestern Michigan Jewish Welfare Federation was formed in 1940.

Benton Harbor's Jewish community dates back to 1882. Its 880 Jews are served by Temple Beth El (reform), Congregation B'nai Shalom (conservative), and the Arthur Sidney Mendel Educational Center.

Saginaw (560 Jews) supports Congregation B'nai Israel (conservative), founded in 1890, and Temple Beth El (reform), organized in 1903. The Jewish Welfare Federation opened in 1949.

Flint (3,000 Jews) claims Harry Weingarden and his wife as the first Jewish settlers in 1905. Congregation Beth Israel (conservative) is an outgrowth of the Jewish Community Center started in 1910. Temple Beth El (reform) was organized in 1927. The Jewish Community Council began in 1936.

Muskegon (525 Jews) is served by Congregation B'nai Israel (reform), organized in 1901.

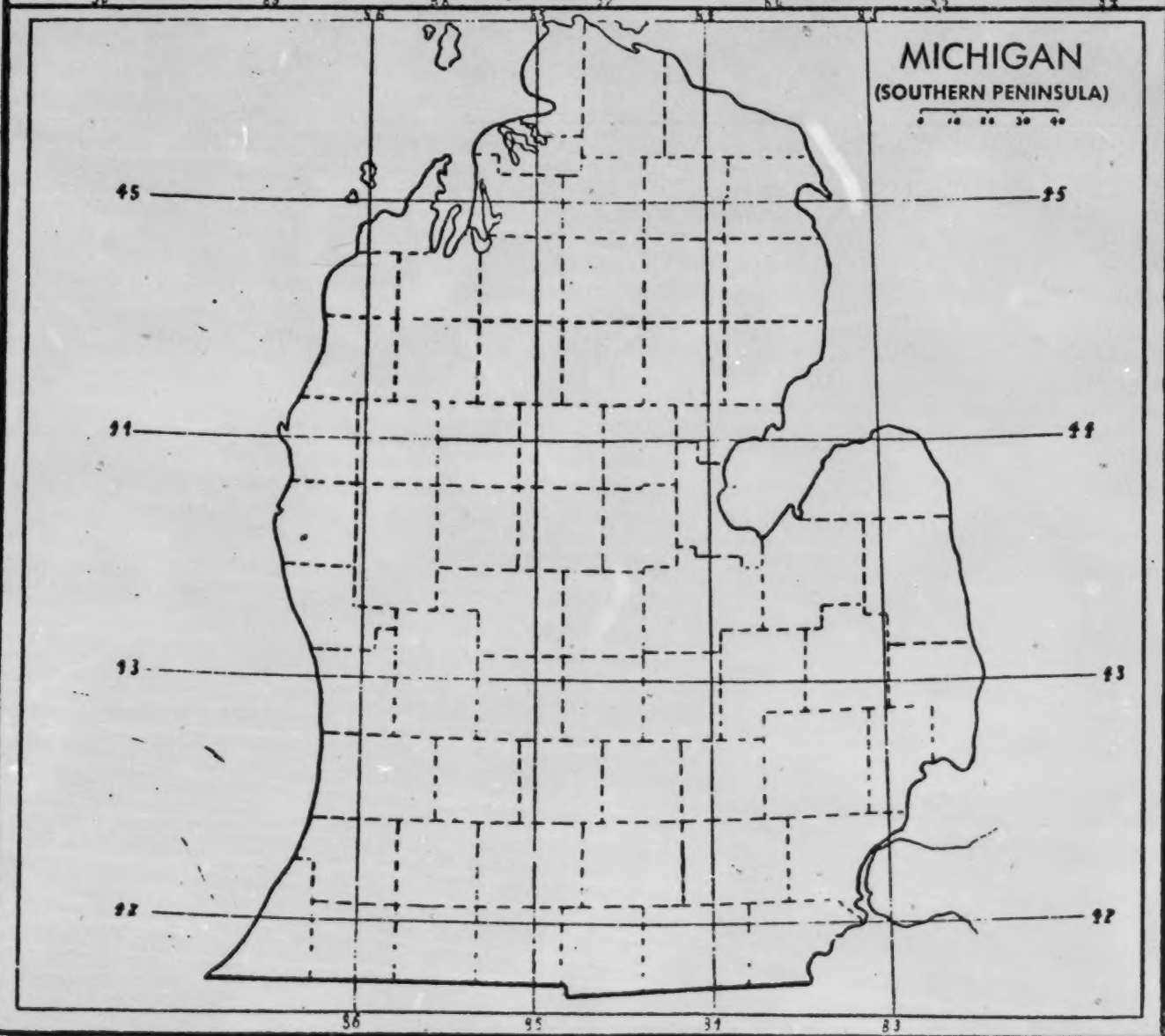
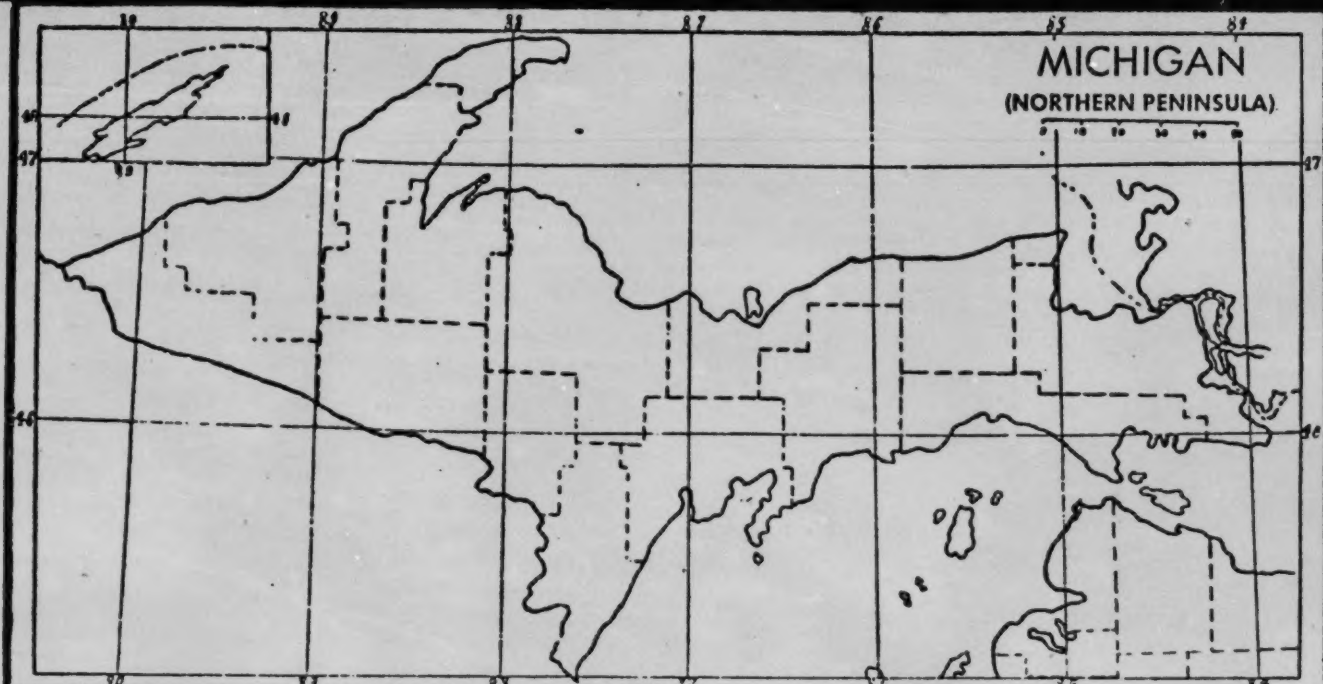
Mount Clemens (420 Jews) has an orthodox congregation, Beth Tefilath Moses, founded in 1912.

South Haven (315 Jews) organized its First Hebrew Congregation (orthodox) in 1920.

Pontiac's (700 Jews) Jewish Community Center was incorporated in 1923, forerunner of Temple Beth Jacob (reform), organized in 1932. Congregation B'nai Israel (conservative) was founded in 1934.

Battle Creek (245 Jews) supports the Jewish Center (orthodox), organized in 1935, and Temple Beth El (reform).

Small Jewish communities also exist in Alpena, Hancock, Iron Mountain, Ishpeming, Mount Pleasant, Midland, Monroe, Petoskey, Port Huron and Traverse City.



**UNIT V**

**SLIDES 50-69**

- a) The Development of the Detroit Jewish Community**
- b) Chapman Abraham, An Early Settler in Detroit**
- c) A Chronology of Detroit Jewish History**

## Probe Questions

### A. On Detroit Jewish History

1. We usually divide the early patterns of American Jewish immigration into the Sephardic period, the German period and the Eastern European Period. Place the following events into this proper column.

| <u>Sephardic Period (1760-1840)</u> | <u>German Period (1840-1880)</u> | <u>Eastern European Period (1880)</u> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

- a. The arrival of Ezekiel Solomon.
- b. The American Revolution
- c. The settlement of the Ann Arbor area by Jews.
- d. The formation of Temple Beth-El.
- e. The formation of Congregation Shaarey Zedek
- f. The development of the Orthodox movement in Detroit.

### B. On Chapman Abraham

1. Why did the Jewish emigration to Detroit follow the British and not the French?
2. What was Mr. Abraham's business? Why was he a merchant or trader?

### C. On the Chronological History

1. Why did Congregation Shaarey Zedek separate from Temple Beth-El?
2. What is B'nai Brith?
3. Why was the language of instruction at Temple Beth-El German?
4. Who was Kaufman Kohler?
5. What kind of synagogue is B'nai Israel today?

How Did the Jewish Community of Detroit Develop?  
by Irving Katz

(Detroit, largest city in Michigan, with a population of 4,183,800 in Metropolitan Detroit (1968), of whom 84,500 were Jews.

1760-1840. The British conquest of Canada from the French in 1760 included the forts along the western Great Lakes, among them Fort Detroit. Several Jews arrived in Detroit with the British, among them Elias Meyer, commandant of the Royal American Regiment, who is believed to have been Jewish. Chapman Abraham, Detroit's first known Jewish settler, arrived in Detroit in 1762, and became a successful trader for more than 20 years. Levi Solomons, partner of Chapman Abraham, was captured by the Indians near Detroit during the 1763 Pontiac Conspiracy. Chapman Abraham was captured during the 1763 Indian siege of Detroit, and after two harrowing months was released in exchange for an Indian chief. During the American Revolution Abraham fought in Canada against the invading Americans, remaining a loyalist all his life. Later records show he lived in Detroit in 1783. Hayman Levy of New York, largest fur trader among the colonists and at one time a partner of Levi Solomons, carried on extensive business with Detroit merchants in 1774 and thereafter. Samuel Judah, relative of Chapman Abraham's wife, traded in Detroit from 1780. Michael Gratz, prominent Jewish merchant and communal leader in Philadelphia during Colonial times, helped plan and supply an expedition against the British in Detroit in 1781, led by General George Rogers Clark, during the struggle for independence.

Ezekiel Solomon, Michigan's first known Jewish settler, arrived in Fort Michilimackinac (today Mackinaw City) in 1761, and lived in Detroit in 1789. Moses David, of the well-known Montreal David family, lived in Sandwich (now Windsor), Ontario, in 1792, when Sandwich and Detroit were still under British rule. Isaac Moses joined Zion Lodge, Detroit's first Masonic lodge, in 1798, two years after Detroit's occupation by the Americans. Louis Benjamin was awarded a new plot of ground in 1808 to indemnify him for his loss in Detroit's great fire of 1805. Frederick E. Cohen, an English Jew, was in Detroit in 1837 during the Canadian rebellion, when he served in the Canadian militia. He became a prominent portrait painter, the first Jewish artist in Michigan. His self-portrait hangs in the Detroit Institute of Arts.

1840-1880. With the wave of Jewish emigration from Germany in the 1840s, German Jews began to arrive in Detroit. Charles E. Bresler, a settler of the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area in the 1830s, moved to Detroit in 1844. He dealt in horses, furs, and wool, and made a fortune importing steel pens. He was one of the incorporators of Detroit's Temple Beth El. Edward Kanter arrived in Detroit in 1844, moving to Mackinac the following year where he was employed by the American Fur Company. Later he worked for the Leopold Brothers, pioneers on the island of Mackinac in the fishery business, and

fur traders. Kanter returned to Detroit in 1852 and became Detroit's first Jewish banker and the first Michigan Jew to serve in the state legislature. Kanter Street is named after him. Simon Freedman, a settler of Adrian, Michigan, in the early 1840s, established a large dry goods business in Detroit around 1844, joined by his family. The Freedman brothers were among the founders of Detroit's Temple Beth-El: Joseph was the first secretary of the congregation, Simon served as president, and Herman was president of the religious school board. In the 1870s, David J. Wockum was the first Jew to serve on the Detroit Board of Education.

In 1850 the congregation Beth-El was founded in the home of Sarah and Isaac Couzens by 12 German Jewish families. By that time, many of the first German, Bohemian, and Hungarian Jewish settlers of the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti area had moved to Detroit, which was well on its way to becoming the commercial center of Michigan. In 1851 a half acre of land on Champlain (later Lafayette) Street was purchased for a cemetery, the oldest Jewish congregational cemetery in Michigan. Beth El congregation's first rabbi, Samuel Marcus, was interred there in 1854 during a cholera epidemic. Originally an Orthodox congregation, Beth El became Reform in 1861, resulting in the withdrawal of 17 members who formed the Orthodox Shaarey Zedek congregation, later an important Conservative congregation. Beth El became a large and influential Reform Congregation, and among its leading rabbis was Kaufmann Kohler (1869-71.)

1880-1914. By 1880 there were approximately 1,000 Jews in Detroit, more than half from Eastern Europe, the others German Jews. There was one Reform congregation, Temple Beth El, and four Orthodox congregations, Shaarey Zedek, B'nai Israel (1871), B'nai Jacob (1875), and Beth Jacob (1878). Three charities in existence were: the Ladies' Society for the Support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans, popularly known as "Frauen Verein" (1863), Beth El Hebrew Relief Society, and Shaarey Zedek Jewish Relief Society. B'nai Brith, Keshet Shel Barzel, and the Free Sons of Israel all had lodges in Detroit, and there was one flourishing social club, the Phoenix Social Club (1872).

The period 1880-1914 was characterized by the massive influx of Eastern European Jews into the city. Relations between the newcomers, most of whom were of the Orthodox tradition, and the more acculturated German Jewish community, primarily members of Temple Beth El, were ambivalent. Considerations of class, social standing, religious outlook, and degree of Americanization tended to keep the groups separate. However, the German community's sense of obligation to their less fortunate coreligionists overcame their feelings of antipathy; two new charitable societies, the Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society (1882) and the Self-Help Circle (1889), were organized to assist them.

Some Eastern Europeans, conscious of the gulf between themselves and the city's German Jewish community, preferred to established communal institutions more responsive to their special needs. The most important of these were the Talmud Torah Institute (1897), Hebrew Free Loan Association (1895), and Workman's Circle (1907).

Realizing that the profusion of Jewish charities resulted in unnecessary duplication and waste, Leo M. Franklin, rabbi of Temple Beth El (1899-1941), united the Beth El Hebrew Relief Society, 'Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society, Jewish Relief Society, and Self-Help Circle into the United Jewish Charities (1899). David W. Simons was the first president and Blanche Hart was superintendent till 1923. Despite differences, the German and the East European groups managed to cooperate in communal undertakings. This was exemplified when Temple Beth El, oldest and most prestigious congregation in the city, agreed to join the Kehilla (1911) organized by the Orthodox community. This ability to work together remained a characteristic of the Detroit Jewish community. Prominent rabbis of the period included Leo Franklin; Judah Leib Levin, who was instrumental in organizing the United Orthodox Hebrew Congregations in the early 1900s, and founded the Yeshivah Beth Yehuda; and Abraham Hershman of Conservative Shaarey Zedek (1908-46), an ardent Zionist.

Starting in the 1880s, Detroit's Jewish community concentrated most heavily in the retail and wholesale clothing trades, mostly as proprietors of their own businesses, and in the clerical or white collar occupations as salesman, insurance agents, and office workers. While Jews did not dominate any trade the way they did the garment industry in New York, a Jewish "monopoly" in Detroit's economic life did develop in the waste material and scrap metal business. By the late 1880s Jews outnumbered gentiles in this industry, and by the 1890s it had become almost solely a "Jewish" industry. This dominance was to continue after World War II.

Intergroup relations throughout this period saw German Jews being accepted into the economic and political areas of city life, while excluded from the social sphere. The immigrant Jews, on the other hand, were often victims of physical harassment. In the 1890s the city's Jews were subjected to a wide variety of anti-Semitic attacks. The caricature and stereotype of the Jew as "shylock" and financial manipulator who exploited the workingman were utilized in political campaigns, especially in the Free Silver campaign of 1896. Jewish peddlers were frequently physically attacked and harassed. This situation got so serious that in 1900 a Jewish Peddlers Protective Union was organized. Many Jewish immigrants would not work in the automobile plants because of fear of violence to them.

Jews participated in the political life of Detroit during this period. Samuel Goldwater, a city alderman in 1894 and the Democratic party's candidate for mayor in 1895, was the major force behind the organization of the Michigan Federation of Labor (1889). David E. Heineman served as a member of the state legislature (1896-1901) and Detroit's City Council (1902-09), and was city controller during 1910-13. In 1909 he was president of the American League of Municipalities; he also designed the flag of Detroit. Charles C. Simons was a state senator (1902). David W. Simons was a member of the first nine-man city council (1918).

1915-1940. The outbreak of World War I ended European immigration to Detroit till 1920. In 1915 the Jewish community numbered about 35,000 persons and contained one Reform and 19 Orthodox congregations. Both figures were to grow steadily so that by 1940 the Jewish population had risen to 85,000 and the number of congregations to 48.

The major trend in the Jewish community during these years was the strengthening of its communal organization. A survey of communal needs made in 1923 by the Bureau of Jewish Social Research of New York resulted in the organization, in 1926, of the Jewish Welfare Federation. Its first director was Morris D. Waldman. Housed in the Fred M. Butzel Memorial Building, the Federation included among its affiliate agencies the Jewish Community Council, Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family and Children's Service, Jewish Home for the Aged, Fresh Air Society, Hebrew Free Loan Association, Federation Apartments, Jewish House of Shelter, Jewish Vocational Service and Community Workshop, Resettlement Service, Midrasha College of Jewish Studies, Sinai Hospital and Shiffman Clinic, United Jewish Charities, and the United Hebrew Schools. The Jewish Community Council, organized in 1937, comprised 340 organizations. The first community wide fund drive of the Jewish Welfare Federation in 1926 had 3,185 contributores; in 1940 there were 20,440 contributors; and in 1969 the city's Allied Jewish Campaign raised one of the highest per capita totals in the U.S.

Jewish Education received a boost in 1919 when the United Hebrew Schools was organized by a merger of two talmud torahs. By 1940 the United Hebrew Schools had ten branches. In 1925 Congregation Beth El opened a College of Jewish Studies, and in 1940 an Institute on Judaism for Christian Clergymen. In addition to the various congregational Sunday and Hebrew schools, Jewish education had been fostered by the Beth Yehuda Day and Afternoon School, the Hillel Day School, and the Akiva Hebrew Day School. There are also the Sholem Aleichem, Arbeiter Ring, and Hayim Greenberg Yiddish schools.

This period proved to be crucial for intergroup relations in Detroit. The rise of anti-Semitism in Europe found its counterpart in Detroit with Henry Ford's anti-Jewish newspaper campaign in the Dearborn Independent during the 1920s, and Father Charles E. Coughlin's anti-Semitic radio broadcasts in the 1930s. The 1930s also saw Detroit's German American Bund become fairly active. What was remarkable was that despite attempts to stir up the populace, there were few acts of violence perpetrated against the Jews of the city.

In 1900 an Anglo-Jewish weekly newspaper, the Jewish American, was founded (1900-11), followed by the Detroit Jewish Shronicle (1916-51), and the Jewish News (est. 1942), edited and published by Philip Slomovitz.

Post-World War II. This period witnessed a growth in prosperity among the Jews of Detroit, and increasing mobility characterized by a steady move to the suburbs. The community's religious institutions were consolidated: by 1968 there were 23 Orthodox, six Conservative, four Reform, and one humanistic congregation in the Detroit metropolitan area. Prominent in Jewish and general community affairs was Rabbi Morris Adler, who served Congregation Shaarey Zedek from 1938 to 1966, when he was tragically shot in his pulpit and killed.

Almost all national Jewish organizations and groups are represented in Detroit. A prominent Jewish community leader is Max M. Fisher, long associated with the UJA, United Israel Appeal, and American Jewish Committee. The Louis and Esther Lamed Fund fosters the development of Jewish culture through new projects, grants, and scholarships. The Fred M. Butzel Memorial Award of Detroit's Jewish Welfare Federation (est. 1951) is given for distinguished communal service.

The postwar period saw a decline in physical abuse and the elimination of political anti-Semitism, although there was widespread social discrimination in the 1940s and some discrimination in housing. By 1970 there was still some minimal social discrimination and some "gentlemen's agreements" in housing. Some industries were still notorious for not hiring Jews - notably the Detroit Edison Company and some of the larger automobile corporations.

Jews were to be found in every area of the city's economic life, although despite the prominence of automobile manufacturing in Detroit, few Jews are employed in this industry. The occupational sphere where Jews have predominated is the waste industry, continuing their control of it from the 1890s. By the late 1960s almost 55 per cent of those Jews who were employed could be classed in the manager or proprietor class. By 1970 almost 25 per cent of the Jewish working force were in the professions, while 73 per cent were white-collar workers. Less than 10 per cent were white-collar workers. Less than 10 percent of the Jewish population were blue-collar workers.

Jews prominent in political life included Melvin Ravitz, councilman (1969), and Sander Levin, state senator and chairman of the State Democratic Committee (1969). Among noted civic leaders have been David A. Brown (1875-1958); Max M. Fisher; Norman Drachler, superintendent of the Detroit Public Schools; Leonard N. Simons, president of the Detroit Historical Commission; Alfred A. May, president of the Detroit Round Table of Christians and Jews; and Lawrence Fleischman, past president of the Detroit Institute of Arts Commission.

Detroit Jews have a distinguished record as jurists at the state and national level. Henry M. Butzel was justice of the Supreme Court of Michigan; Charles C. Simons, a judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals; Lawrence Gubow and Theodore Levin, district court judges (1969); and S. Jerome Bronson and Charles Levin, judges of the state court of appeals (1969).

Jews of Detroit also play a prominent part in the cultural life of the city. When the Detroit Symphony Orchestra was organized in 1918, Ossip Gabrilowitsch became the principal conductor. He filled the post till his death in 1935 when Victor Kolar succeeded him. Mischa Mischakoff was concertmaster. Karl Haas was director of fine arts of radio station WJR and president of the Interlochen Arts Academy; concert pianist Mischa Kottler was director of music at radio station WWJ. Albert Kahn, world-renowned architect, built the city's General Motors Building, Fisher Building, and New Center Building, among many others. Charles E. Feinberg was an internationally known collector of Jewish ceremonial art and authority on the poet Walt Whitman. There were seven Jewish country and city clubs.

CHAPMAN ABRAHAM: AN EARLY JEWISH SETTLER  
IN DETROIT

By Irving I. Katz

A Jewish trader settled in Detroit as early as the 1760s, long before the establishment of Temple Beth El, Michigan's first Jewish Congregation, which is observing its Centennial Anniversary this year.

The history of Detroit goes back to July 24, 1701, when Antoine de la Mothe Dacillac, the first Commandant of the French possessions in this locality, and a party of soldiers, voyageurs and Indians planted a settlement upon the banks of the Detroit River, then in the midst of a wilderness, and erected a stockaded fort and village which was named Fort Pontchartrain du Detroit (Fort Pontchartrain on the Strait), in honor of the Comte de Pontchartrain, French Minister of Marine, whose favor made its founding possible. The first forts in the region about the Great Lakes were established by the French for the purpose of facilitating trade with the Indians, and as a protection against the forays of unfriendly Indian tribes. The presence of a fort was regarded by the red men as evidence that the French were masters of the country. For fifty-nine years, Detroit was under French control and its white population was wholly French and wholly Catholic.

The British conquest of Canada in 1760 included the forts along the Western Great Lakes and on November 29, 1760, Major Robert Rogers and a British garrison occupied Detroit and within a few months Fort Detroit (the name Pontchartrain was dropped, of course) was recognized as the center of the Indian trade in the Northwest. The coming of the British led to an infiltration of Anglo-Saxon influences which were chiefly commercial and official. Early in the spring of 1761, English traders began to arrive; and a year later, the name of Chapman Abraham, a Jewish trader, appears in the Detroit records, doing business with James Sterling, a well-known early merchant of Detroit, and in subsequent years with the other early merchants of Detroit.

This Chapman Abraham and his partners (Levi Solomons, Benjamin Lyon, Gershon Levi and Ezekiel Solomons) were commissaries of the British armies during the French and Indian War, the final contest between Great Britain and France for supremacy on the American continent, and the subsequent Indian War of 1763 led by Chief Pontiac. Abraham and three of his partners were captured by the Indians near the Forts of Detroit and Michilimackinac (the Mackinac of today) during the Pontiac Conspiracy, but managed to gain their freedom.

Abraham's capture by the Indians during the memorable Siege of Detroit appears in his own affidavit taken before a Military Court of Inquiry held by Major Henry Gladwin in Detroit. The affidavit, dated August 9, 1763, is as follows:

Mr. Chapman Abraham being sworn informs the Court, that in coming up Detroit River, having put on shore at the place of Monsieur St. Lewis, he acquainted this Deponant that the Fort was besieged by the Indians & Capt. Robertson, Sir Robert Daviss and a great many more English were killed, & that they intended to kill all the English that would come up Detroit River. This Deponant immediately told his men to go back with him; but the before mentioned soldiers told his men if they returned that would be all killed, as the Indians were round the whole Lake and at Niagara, upon which they absolutely refused to return with him. In consequence of which this Deponant put all his goods in said St. Lewis's house, who told him he could do his best to save them from the Indians; Then this Deponant asked him where he should go to hide himself to save his life. He and Madam Esperame (who was present) answered him he should go to her home & hide himself in her cellar; where he continued about ten minutes and then was told by said Madam Esperame to go out of the house; which he obeyed and in going out she perceived his watch chain & gold him to give it to her that she was certain the Indians would kill him; upon which this Deponant told her he would make her a present of it, if she would let him stay in the cellar to save him from the Indians. She answered he should stay no longer in the House; upon which he endeavored to gain the woods, she followed him, demanding the watch a second time, which I again refused. By this time the Indians discovered him, took him prisoner and carried him to St. Lewis's house, where he found some of his goods were put in his canoe. This Deponant says further that one Pero Barth told him that Major Gladwin was the occasion of this Indian War; That if Capt. Campble had commanded this would not have happened; That the sforesaid Major would not give the Indians presents nor suffer their guns to be mended as Capt. Campble did; This Deponant replied that perhaps it was the General's orders not to do so, upon which he immediately said that the General did not order the Major to call them Dogs, Hogs & bid them go out of his house. This Deponant one Day saw Batist Devuiere and a great many other Frenchmen going to a Council with the Indians, he asked some of them what was the matter they would not tell him anything. This Deponant has daily seen some of the Frenchmen trading with the Indians giving them bread, tobacco and fish for English Merchants Goods that were taken from the Prisoners. That Piero & Hyacinth Reaume have traded with the Indians for his effects some of which he had seen worn by said Hyacinth's Daughters since his arrival in the Fort. That Piero LaBute told him he bought of his effects. That Madam La Jenness being indebted to Monsieur Labadie & knowing him to owe this Deponant upward of twelve hundred louis, asked him if he had occasion for a quarter of veal & she would send it to him & discount it, which was proposed to said Labadie, who absolutely refused it. This Deponant says further that Batist Devuiere had bought of his effects.

In a paper, published by this Society, reference was made to the Diary of the Siege of Detroit, and the account of Rev. John Heckewelder where a "Mr. Chapman" is mentioned as a prisoner of the Indians during Pontiac's Siege of Detroit. This "Mr. Chapman" and "Chapman Abraham," the subject of our paper, are one and the same person.

Clarence M. Burton, the noted historian of Detroit, lists Chapman Abraham among the early merchants of Detroit and says that following his release by the Indians, Abraham carried on a successful business in the village. He is the first resident Jew in Detroit to whom reference was found by the writer in the course of his investigation.

Of Abraham's residence and activities in Detroit we find many evidences. In 1765 he was selling rum, in partnership with a man by the name of Lyons (possibly Benjamin Lyon). In 1767 he owned a lot and house on St. John's Street within the Fort of Detroit and purchased a piece of additional land adjoining his property. In the same year he did business under the firm name of "Chapman Abraham and Company," and in 1768, when Detroit had 678 white inhabitants, exclusive of the garrison, he purchased an additional "tract of land with house and appurtenances." In 1769 he was granted a license by Governor Guy Carleton at Montreal to trade at "Michilimackinac and beyond" and his merchandise of one canoe consisted of "rum and brandy, wine, gun-powder, ball & shot, and fusils. In 1776 he sold a tract of land in Detroit.

Chapman Abraham was a staunch British loyalist and fought against the Americans during the War of the Revolution. In a letter to Governor Frederick Haldimand in 1778, Abraham emphasizes his loyal conduct toward the British and his animosity to the rebels. He mentions that he supplied several regiments during the War, was one of those who repelled the rebels at Long Point, and served as a volunteer with the troops when the Americans were defeated at Three Rivers. He claims that he is deeply engaged in trade and asks the Governor for a recommendation. In 1778, 1780, and 1781, Abraham was granted licenses to trade at Detroit. In 1779, he was a witness at a sale of land in Detroit.

Abraham's name is listed on a petition of January 5, 1780, of the merchants of Detroit to Governor Haldimand, which refers to "the heavy losses which they have sustained since the Commencement of the present disturbances, in the transportation of Merchandize Liquors & Peltries, on the communication and over the Lakes." He is also listed among the merchants of Detroit who shipped rum on December 25, 1780.

In 1781, Abraham was doing business with John Askin, a prominent Detroit merchant, as a member of the firm of Chapman Abraham and Company. On March 28, 1781, he appears on a list of merchants of Detroit who petitioned Major Arent Schuyler De Peyster, then the

Commanding Officer of Detroit, to grant relief from merchants who are able but are unwilling to pay their lawful debts. In the same year, he purchased a tenement on St. Louis Street from William Edgar. Under a contract dated October 23, 1781, Abraham sold to Pawling & Burrel all his goods which included "snuff tobacco, mustard, and silver works," and rented to them his "house, shop, cellar & room" for a period of six months. In 1782, when the number of inhabitants in the entire Detroit settlement was 2,191, Abraham sold a tenement and lot to James May. In 1782 and 1783, he did business with Thomas Williams.

Chapman Abraham died about 1783 when Detroit was still in the hands of the British.

Chronology of the History of the Jews of  
Detroit, Michigan

by Irving Katz

- 1850     Sept. 22     At the initiative of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Cozens, 12 German Jews organized the Beth El Society, as an orthodox synagogue, Michigan's first Jewish Congregation. It was the parent organization of today's reform Temple Beth El which numbers close to 1700 families. Jacob Silberman elected first president. Rabbi Samuel Marcus of New York elected first spiritual leader. Hebrew-German-English Day School opened for secular and religious studies for children. Detroit's population of 21,019 gave it the rank of 21st in size among remitted States and Cities. Detroit had about 90 streets. Most of the population lived near the river because of water supply. Lighting was by means of Tallow Candles or lamps which burned lard or whole oil. Estimated Jewish population was 60 in a total of 50,000 in the United States.
- 1857     May     Beth El members organized Pisgah Lodge No. 34 of Independent Order B'nai Brith. Still in existence.
- 1860         Detroit numbered 200 Jews in a population of 45,619.
- 1861     Aug. 30     Beth El dedicated the Rivard Street Synagogue, first Jewish house of worship in Michigan (formerly a church).
- Sept. 27     Beth El introduced organ music and a mixed choir at Sabbath worship. Seventeen members withdrew and organized the Shaarey Zedek Society, Detroit's second orthodox Congregation, the parent organization of today's Conservative Congregation Shaarey Zedek with a membership of 1400 families. Hiram Kraushaer elected first president.
- 1862         Shaarey Zedek legally incorporated. Smith Street cemetery purchased for \$450.00. Still in existence.
- 1863         Rabbi Abraham Laser of Temple Beth El organized Ladies Society for the support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans in the State of Michigan, popularly known as "Frauen Verein". Society existed until 1927 when it was known as "Jewish Widows Aid Society."

- 1864 Rabbi Isidor Kalisch of Temple Beth El dedicated Shaarey Zedek's first synagogue on Congress and St. Antoine, originally a church. Mentefiore Lodge No. 12 of Order Free Sons of Israel organized. Still in existence.
- 1865 Michigan supplied 210 Jewish soldiers for Union Army from 1861-1865, a remarkable military record for the small Jewish population in the State at that time.
- Rabbi Isidor Kazisch conducted a Memorial Service for President Lincoln in the Rivard Street Synagogue on April 19.
- 1867 Aug. 30 The new synagogue of Beth El on Washington and Clifford, originally a church, dedicated.
- 1869 Temple Beth El discontinued its day school and opened a religious school which met after public school hours. Rabbi Kaufmann Kohler, great scholar and theologian, was brought to Detroit from Germany to serve as Beth El's Rabbi. He served in later years as president of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.
- Beth El and Shaarey Zedek organized Gentlemen's Hebrew Relief Society (later Beth El Hebrew Relief Society), Detroit's first centralized philanthropic agency.
- Beth El Lodge of Order Kosher Shel Barzel formed.
- 1870 Detroit numbered 540 Jews in a population of 79,577.
- 1871 Congregation A'nai Israel legally incorporated. Still in existence.
- 1876 Charity Lodge No. 14 of Improved Order Free Sons of Israel, organized.
- 1878 Shaarey Zedek Synagogue on Congress and St. Antoine completed; first Jewish House of Worship built by Detroit Jews.
- Library of Temple Beth El established, first Jewish congregational library in Michigan.
- 1880 Detroit numbered 665 Jews in population of 116,340.
- 1882 Members of Temple Beth El organized Hebrew Ladies Sewing Society to assist Jewish refugees from Russia.

- Well cooked and well served dinner (not Kosher) could be obtained in Detroit for thirty cents. Included soup, beef, and fish, three kinds of vegetables, bread and butter, pies, pudding, coffee.
- 1885 Rabbi Louis Grossmann, a graduate of the Hebrew Union College, assumed the spiritual leadership of Temple Beth El, first American trained rabbi to come to Detroit.
- 1886 Rabbi Grossmann organized Beth El Alumna Association (now Young People's Society), first Jewish Youth organization in Detroit.
- 1889 Rabbi Aaron M. Ashinsky came to Detroit as spiritual leader of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, B'nai Israel and Beth Jacob. He was Detroit's first modern orthodox rabbi. He studied for two years at Detroit School of Medicine.
- Members of Beth El organized Self-Help Circle to assist Jewish refugees from Russia.
- 1890 Detroit numbered 1200 Jews in a population of 205,876.
- 1891 Rabbi Louis Grossmann organized Jewish Women's Club of Temple Beth El, later Jewish Women's Club of Detroit. In 1925 the club became affiliated with National Council of Jewish Women and assumed the name of Detroit Section of National Council of Jewish Women.
- 1891 Members of Shaarey Zedek formed Jewish Relief Society. Beth El Hebrew Relief Society formed City-Wide Committee and appealed to Jews of Detroit and Michigan to assist Jewish farmers of Palestine Colony at Bad Axe, Michigan.
- Congregation Beth David (now B'nai David), organized by Russian Jews, legally incorporated.
- Congregation Beth Abraham, organized by Austrian and Galician Jews, legally incorporated.
- 1892 Exhibition of products of Palestine Colony in Bad Axe held at Beth El, first exhibition of Farm products raised by Jews held in United States.
- Henry Ford produced his first car (two cylinder machine).
- 1893 Hebrew Peddler's Protective Association formed.
- 1895 Hebrew Free Loan Association (originally Gemiluth Chasodim Society) formed.
- 1896 Rabbi Louis Grossmann won fight to eliminate Bible readings in Detroit Public schools.

1897

House of Shelter (originally Assembly of David and House of Shelter) formed.

Talmud Torah Institute, later the well-known Division Street Talmud Torah, opened.

Rabbi Judah L. Levin came to Detroit as spiritual leader of Congregation Shaarey Zedek, B'nai Israel and Beth Jacob. Present Yeshivath Beth Yehudah named after him. Montefiore Club organized.

1898

A number of Detroit Jews served in Spanish-American War.

## BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

If you are interested in a particular subject, look at one of the following books:

Grinstein, Hyman B. The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1945).

This book discusses in great depth the beginnings of the New York Jewish community.

Karp, Abraham J. The Jewish Experience in America. Vol. I: The Colonial Period (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1969).

Dr. Karp has edited and selected the best articles about major periods of American Jewish history.

Katz, Irving I. The Beth-El Story (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1955).

Mr. Katz tells the story of Temple Beth-El and records the history of the Jews of Detroit and Michigan.

Learsi, Rufus. The Jews in America: A History. (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1934).

Learsi always presents a clear and concise treatment of historical ideas and trends.

Marcus, Jacob R. The Colonial American Jew, Volume I: 1492-1776 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970).

Dr. Marcus is the foremost scholar of American Jewish history. This book presents in great detail the history of the Colonial Period.

Pool, David de Sola. Portraits Etched In Stone. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952).

Dr. de Sola Pool records the history of Shearith Israel Congregation. His pictures and his details are fascinating.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Scheppes, Morris U. A Pictorial History of the Jews in the United States. (New York: Marzani and Munsell, 1958).

This book tells the story of the Jews in the United States and also has many very good pictures.

The Story of Shaarey Zedek

A booklet available for \$1.00 at the Learning Resource Center of Shaarey Zedek. This pamphlet records the history of Congregation Shaarey Zedek.

A DOCUMENTARY INQUIRY PACKET  
FOR  
THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS OF MICHIGAN

PART II

by

MR. ALBERT KARBAL

MR. IRVING I. KATZ

DR. GERALD A. TELLER, EDITOR

## INTRODUCTION

This Inquiry package is the second in the Michigan Jewish Multi-Media History project. These documents represent the history of the Jews in Michigan and America from 1880-1920

It is the hope of the authors that the readers will be able to discern historical patterns out of the facts of history. The task of the teachers is to aid the student in his inquiry. Conclusions should not be presented before the documents are read and discussed.

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DOCUMENT #1

INTRODUCTION: THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN JEW BY ABRAHAM J. KARP

Inquiry Question:

Why do most American Jews trace their ancestry back to Eastern Europe?

The decades of the Civil War and Reconstruction saw a decrease in immigration. The first attempt at a Jewish population survey, undertaken by the Board of Delegates of American Israelites in 1877, placed the number of Jews in the United States at 230,257.

But a new wave of immigration was set in motion by the throwing of the bomb that took the life of Alexander II, "Czar of all the Russias," in March 1881. The assassination touched off pogroms in more than a hundred Jewish communities, followed by restrictive laws aimed at eliminating Jews from economic and civic life. Physical persecution, political oppression, and economic disabilities brought two and one-half million Jews from eastern Europe to American shores in the half century from 1880 to 1930.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, all manner of restrictive, oppressive measures had been enacted against Russia's Jews. Young boys were forced into long-term military service; Jews were expelled from many communities and restricted to the western provinces; a whole series of laws, decrees and enactments regulated Jewish communal, cultural, and religious life.

In the second half of the century, Czar Alexander II, in an attempt to modernize Russian society, undertook reforms designed to integrate the Jew into Russian economic, social and civil life. "Useful" Jews were permitted to reside in areas which heretofore had been closed to them. Some Jews were admitted to the universities and the professions. It seemed that a bright day was beginning to dawn for Russian Jewry.

The hope was short-lived. Though emancipated in the early 1860's, the peasants were not provided with the means of fending for themselves. They began to crowd the cities, competing with Jewish merchants and artisans. Their plight intensified the revolutionary movement, and this in turn aroused reactionary forces. The abortive Polish revolution of 1863 led to attempts at "Russification" of the Polish provinces and the growth of a Russian chauvinistic nationalism. Jews were accused of economic domination and exploitation. A pogrom in Odessa dramatized the precarious Jewish situation, resulting in the migration of 40,000 east European Jews to America between 1870 and 1880.

The 1870's were but a prelude. The pogroms following Czar Alexander's assassination were justified in Russian government circles as resulting from the Russian populace's reaction to Jewish economic oppression. Indeed, the government felt it had to "shield the Russian population against this harmful Jewish activity." The "Temporary Laws" of May 31, 1882 (known as the "May Laws") forbade Jews to settle in villages; gave villages the right to drive out Jews already living in them; expelled many Jews from such cities as St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev; limited the number of Jews in secondary schools and universities; prohibited Jews from entering the legal profession and participating in local government.

(con't)

The "strong man" of Russian politics at the time, Constantine Pobedonostsev, advocated a police state guided by the Russian Orthodox Church. He had a formula for the solution of the Jewish problem in Russia: one-third of the Jews were to be permitted to die; one-third to convert to Christianity; one-third to emigrate. The Jews took his third plank most seriously. The mass migration begun in the 1880's was brought to an end for Russian Jews by the Revolution of 1917, and for Polish Jews by the restrictive American immigration law of 1924.

In the decade 1880-1890, some 200,000 Jews emigrated from Eastern Europe; by the next decade the number doubled. The great majority came from Russia-Poland but an appreciable number came from Galicia, Hungary and Romania.

DOCUMENT #2

INTRODUCTION: THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN JEW by ABRAHAM J. KARP

Inquiry Question:

Why did the German Jews look down upon the Eastern European Jews?

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, to the largely west European German-speaking, religiously Reform, rapidly assimilating community of merchants and artisans was added an east European, Yiddish-speaking Orthodox or military antireligious, culturally separated community of shopworkers and small storekeepers. Though they were united by shared historic memories, a common religious heritage, and a mutuality of concern and responsibility, the separation wrought by differences of language, customs, culture, and economic status seemed more pronounced, real and immediate. Recrimination abounded. The German Jews saw their Russian brethren as indigent refugees burdened by their barbarian culture and appalling manners. They were an object of pity and a source of embarrassment. They did not tire of informing their American neighbors that these were "different Jews." At the same time they gave freely of their time and substance to help the Russian Jew become established, educated, and "Americanized." Russian Jews accused the Germans of being economic exploiters, cultural apostates, and religious renegades. But this did not prevent them from taking pride in a political triumph, academic accomplishment, professional distinction, or economic success which came to a member of the often berated and always envied German Jewish community.

As the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth, American Jewry was divided into two communities. At the time the differences seemed so strong that many thought them to be permanent. Others believed that as the immigrant became a resident the schism would heal, and the mutually shared heritage and interests and the overriding consciousness of the unity of Jewish identity would forge a unified and united American Israel.

DOCUMENT #3

TIDAL WAVES FROM EUROPE

Inquiry Question:

Can you see some patterns?

- a) Why did Jewish immigration increase and then decrease?  
What were the world forces? What happened in Russia?
- b) Did men come alone or with their families?

## TIDAL WAVES FROM EASTERN EUROPE: 1870 - 1924

In 1881, the number of Jews reaching the shores of the United States from Eastern Europe was 5,692. Five years later the number swelled to 19,936. Of these, 14,029 came from Russia, 5,326 from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, 518 from Romania. Further figures for east European immigration appear below:\*

| YEAR | RUSSIA  | AUSTRIA-HUNGARY | ROMANIA | TOTAL   |
|------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| 1891 | 43,457  | 5,890           | 854     | 50,201  |
| 1898 | 20,168  | 9,831           | 744     | 30,743  |
| 1901 | 37,660  | 13,006          | 6,827   | 57,818  |
| 1906 | 125,234 | 14,884          | 3,127   | 152,491 |
| 1911 | 65,472  | 12,757          | 2,188   | 90,257  |
| 1914 | 102,638 | 20,454          | 2,646   | 136,645 |

There was a sharp decline in immigration during World War I and the postwar years with the exception of 1921, when 119,036 immigrants arrived. In the following two years 53,524 (1922) and 49,989 (1923) newcomers were admitted, but the number fell to 10,292 in 1924 and remained at about that rate through 1930. It then fell to 5,692 in 1931 and 2,755 in 1932; it reached its nadir in 1933, which saw only 2,372 arrivals. Hitler's persecution caused a significant rise in immigrants, with 43,450 being admitted in 1939 alone. But the "tidal wave" of immigrants came during the first two decades of the century.

The number of east European immigrants in New York City in 1910, by place of origin and sex, were as follows:

| ORIGIN            | MALE    | FEMALE  | TOTAL   |
|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Russia            | 257,418 | 222,771 | 480,189 |
| Austria (Galicia) | 95,941  | 94,296  | 190,237 |
| Hungary           | 35,224  | 41,401  | 76,625  |
| Romania           | 16,461  | 17,123  | 33,584  |

Despite the increase in immigration in the first years of the 1880's, the really large-scale movement from eastern Europe took place in the early years of the twentieth century. Immigrants who were settled laid the base for the arrival of others. While some of the settlers were not eager to receive new immigrants who might enter into competition for jobs, the majority who came were anxious to bring over relatives who had remained behind.

Proof of their readiness to help was to be found in the immigrant community's organizations for receiving and aiding the newcomers. Sweatshop owners also awaited new "hands" to exploit; small merchants looked for new customers.

Unlike the immigration experience of other groups where the male population far outnumbered the female, there was little disparity in the Jewish community. Jews arrived in family units, and came to stay. If a man emigrated alone, for the most part he sought the first opportunity to bring over his sweetheart, or wife and children.

\* Discrepancy in numbers after 1901 is due to the transmigration of east European Jews through countries of western Europe, the Americas and the Turkish Empire.

DOCUMENT #4

ELLIS ISLAND

Inquiry Question:

Do you know where Ellis Island is?

## CASTLE GARDEN - A GEHENNA

Of the actual arrival in New York, George M. Price gave a detailed and somewhat bitter account. During 1890-91 a series of his articles about his early days in America appeared in Voskhod, a Russian-Jewish periodical published in St. Petersburg. These articles appeared in book form in 1893 (The Russian Jew in America): as an appendix to his book, he had added a memoir of his experiences and those of fellow immigrants on their arrival in New York. This brief excerpt from the appendix, translated by Leo Shpall, is taken from Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (vol. 47):

Castle Garden is a large building, a Gehenna, through which all Jewish arrivals must pass to be cleansed before they are considered worthy of breathing freely the air of the land of the almighty dollar. In the spacious courtyard of this institution which is surrounded by high walls so that no one can enter or leave except through the gate, at which are stationed half a dozen guards, those immigrants who have not as yet been admitted (to the United States) have to find a place for themselves... About the conveniences of the immigrants, the Americans of Castle Garden worry very little. The Europeans, they say, are anyway unaccustomed to luxury; they can be satisfied with the soiled courtyard of the "Gates of Freedom," as the Yankees call this preliminary prison. The courtyard of Castle Garden accommodates no more than several hundred. You can just visualize a sight when they confine in it more than a thousand Jews, recently liberated from the terrors of the trip, who had hoped to be welcomed with music....For about a week, they kept us in this Hades where we had to sleep on the floor under the open skies, which is not comfortable at any time, particularly when it rains. Little by little, they finally found accommodations for those who came on our boat. Some of us they placed in houses; others were sent to Greenpoint; and the rest, among whom was I, they simply expelled from the Gates of Freedom. "Go (they said), our land is big and fruitful, go ahead and live in it by begging."...

DOCUMENT #5

RESTRICTIVE IMMIGRATION

Inquiry Question:

Why would the United States want to restrict immigration?

Congressman, Albert Johnson, chairman of the Committee of Immigration, House of Representatives, who gave his name to the 1924 bill, summed up the arguments of the restrictionists in his article, "The Coming Immigration Law," which appeared in the same issue of The Outlook:

After years of study, including investigations in lands across the Atlantic and lands across the Pacific, the majority of the members of the House Committee on Immigration are, I believe, of the opinion that mankind is literally at the cross-roads. The distresses of the peoples of the world, white, black and yellow are so many and the increase in the birth rate in all countries except France and Mexico is so great that the probabilities are that our own children will resent the fact that we have not been more successful in passing more stringent immigration restrictive acts. Our grandchildren will, fifty or sixty years from now, in all probability, be scratching hard for a foothold and food in the United States of America - the past land of boasted riches and untold resources.

I believe that the majority of the people of the United States, including even those of alien birth, have come to a very firm conclusion with respect to immigration. They think, and the majority of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization agrees, I believe, that -

1. Immigrants shall never again come to the United States as mere commodities in the labor scheme.

2. That the name melting-pot is a misnomer and that the asylum idea is played out forever.

3. That the countries of the world shall no longer dump upon the United States their criminals, their feeble, their aged and their undesirables.

4. That if we are to clean house and provide those guarantees for every last alien now within our borders, each one of whom is included in those magnificent words which begin the first sentence of the Preamble to the Constitution, "We the people of the United States," that we should, as far as possible, admit the husbands or wives, minor unmarried children, fathers and mothers, and even grandfathers and grandmothers, of those aliens now here, but decline to admit other dependents in any number under any quota scheme from any country; as a matter of fact, eighty-five per cent of all immigrants who have come to the United States in the past ten years have come to relatives, and for the last fiscal year ninety-eight per cent of all immigrants who came from Poland came to relatives, nearly all supplied with money furnished by these relatives; and although a very large number started without money and arrived without money, they were able within three weeks to find the money to send for more relatives.

5. That in order to prevent the growth of racial hatred, with its accompanying religious differences, it is highly desirable to keep out from the United States as many new arrivals as possible until we have thoroughly cleaned house.

6. That the United States should not continue to admit for permanent residence within its borders those who are, under the law, ineligible to citizenship, and that sooner or later the United States must amend its Constitution so as to deny citizenship to those born here whose parents were ineligible to citizenship.

DOCUMENT #6

FAMILY: PROBLEMS & PROMISE

Inquiry Question:

- a) Why did Alter not want to return home?
- b) How does he feel about abandoning his wife?
- c) What is happening to Alter?

## FAMILY: PROBLEMS AND PROMISE

The mist of light and shadow that characterized the lives of new arrivals is reflected in a letter written by a husband living in New York to the wife he had left behind in Warsaw. It is doubtful whether the letter ever reached its destination, for it was intercepted by the censor in Warsaw, who had it translated into Polish. Copies of the translation were preserved in the archives of the censor and of the Warsaw Jewish community. It was published in Itzhak Schipper's Nasz Przegląd in 1938. The full text follows:

New York, Nov. 8, 1866

My Dear Wife Pearl Orenstein:

I am really surprised that you would even think that I am so foolish as to return home with neither money nor a livelihood, to await a handout from our parents and to become the laughing stock of all our friends.

Should I leave a land where freedom lives in every corner; a land, where the old ways are not hallowed; where there is no trace of that old nonsense; a land of freedom of thought; and above all, a land where there are things more important than good digestion? Shall I return to that accursed and foolish environment which I left? And what kind of society can I be part of there? Of one thing you may be certain, the long kapote (coat worn by the Chasidim) which I wore but could not bear, I will never again wear! Should I return home to expose myself to ridicule and have "nonbeliever" shouted at me by the stupid, who will avoid me when they really should respect me? No, this I will never do! At least not as long as I will need to live among the Chasidim.

I do believe that even in Warsaw one can be happy if fortune smiles on him. But as for myself, I would not want it, even if I would find great wealth there. Here my soul is free, there she would be fettered. Still, I hope some day to return home, but I will live true to my convictions, and I hope some day to carry on a business there or elsewhere, which would afford me a good living.

I have only been here a short time, but I have already learned the stratagems they are applying toward me. Someone told me that a certain carpenter is looking for me and that he brought with him a letter from you to the Rabbi of New York. What nonsense! Don't you know that New York does not have a rabbi? First of all this is a free country. Anyone can do what he wants. No one is controlled here. And second, what can a rabbi do to me? Can he grab me by the ears and send me home? Is it wise that you send a person to find me who is not of the finest, who can hurt my business by telling all kinds of stories about me? No! That is not the right way. I swear by God that day and night I think of you and my dear children, thinking only how I can make for you a good and secure future, when we will be able to live together as we ought to.

FAMILY: PROBLEMS AND PROMISE (con't)

In the meanwhile, I have not been able to do much business because I do not know the language, and that is an absolute must. I never learned a trade, and to begin now is too difficult. To go from house to house peddling as so many who have no trade do, that I couldn't do. It would be too difficult for me, for I was not trained for such work at home. So, things have been going rather badly for me. Truthfully, what can I write to you? So that some people will have pity on me, and others will see it as punishment from God? Unfortunately, I have found few friends among those I have met here because I have not been able to become part of a cultured group. Those who know me show me little compassion. So I waited until I could save some money to send to you because the money I brought with me went before I could even turn around. Now, thank God, my situation has improved a little and I will get to some money. So I write you this letter, you shouldn't think that I have forgotten you and our dear children.

Your eternally faithful and loving husband,  
Alter Orenstein

P.S. At present I cannot tell you where to write to me because I do not know where I will be. I am leaving New York now because I have no prospects here. With the greatest of efforts, I might be able to send you a hundred rubles, but I know that sending such a sum can't help you as much as it can harm me. You are with the family which will not permit that you will lack for anything. But for me, who am in a strange land looking. . .

DOCUMENT #7

SWEATSHOPS

Inquiry Question:

- a) Why did children have to work?
- b) If they had to work, did they go to school?
- c) Were the Jews happy here in America?

Edwin Markham, who was moved by the plight of the farm laborer to write his classis poem, described the plight of boys and girls in the sweatshops of the ghetto no less poignantly. His article appeared in Cosmopolitan Magazine, January 1907:

### 60,000 CHILDREN IN SWEATSHOPS

Long before Hannah made a coat for little Samuel, women sat in the home at garmentmaking. The sweated sewing in the tenement home today is only a belated following of this custom of the ages. But the leisurely sewing of the old times was far away from the nerve-racking work of our hurried age. The slow ways are gone. In unaired rooms, mothers and fathers sew by day and by night. Those in the home sweatshop must work cheaper than those in the factory sweatshops if they would drain work from the factory, which has already skinned the wage down to a miserable pittance. And the children are called in from play to drive and drudge beside their elders. The load falls upon the ones least able to bear it - upon the backs of the little children at the base of the labor pyramid.

All the year in New York and in other cities you may watch children radiating to and from such pitiful homes. Nearly any hour on the East Side of New York City you can see them - pallid boy or spindling girl - their faces dulled, their backs bent under a heavy load of garments piled on head and shoulders, the muscles of the who frame in a long strain. The boy always has bowlegs and walks with feet wide apart and wobbling. Here, obviously, is a hoe man in the making. Once at home with the sewing, the little worker sits close to the inadequate window, struggling with the snarls of thread or shoving the needle through unwielding cloth. Even if by happy chance the small worker goes to school, the sewing which he puts down at the last moment in the morning waits for his return.

Never again should one complain of buttons hanging by a thread, for tiny, tortured fingers have doubtless done their little ineffectual best. And for his lifting of burdens, this giving of youth and strength, this sacrifice of all that should make childhood radiant, a child may add to the family purse from 50 cents to \$1.50 a week. In the rush times of the year, preparing for the changes of seasons or for the great "white sales," there are no idle fingers in the sweatshops. A little child of "seven times one" can be very useful in threading needles, in cutting the loose threads at the ends of seams, and in pulling out bastings. To be sure, the sewer is docked for any threads left on or for any stitch broken by the little bungling fingers. The light is not good, but baby eyes must "look sharp."

Besides work at sewing, there is another industry for little girls in the grim tenements. The mother must be busy at her sewing, or, perhsps, she is away from dark to dark at office cleaning. A little daughter, therefore, must assume the work and care of the family. She becomes the "little mother", washing, scrubbing, cooking. In New York City alone, 60,000 children are shut up in the home sweatshops. This is a conservative estimate, based upon a recent investigation of the Lower East Side of Manhattan Island, south of 14th Street and east of the Bowery. Many of this immense host will never sit on a school bench. Is it not a cruel civilization that allows little hearts and little shoulders to strain under these grown up responsibilities, while in the same city a pet cur is jeweled and pampered and aired on a fine lady's velvet lap on the beautiful boulevards?

DOCUMENT # 8

INTERNAL RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

Inquiry Question:

- a) Can you describe the tensions that developed between children and parents over religious observance?
- b) Did young people feel that the rejection of religious observances would make them more "American"?

## INTERNAL RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS

The old mother immediately assumes the duties of the household, and her husband, after a few days of sight seeing, is either initiated into some easy labor, or is left alone to spend his time as he sees fit, his support being provided for by his children. Glad as they are of the fine appearance of their children, of their modern ways and their business successes, they cannot suppress a sigh at beholding their shaved chins or at seeing them eat their breakfast without having put on their phylacteries, prayed, washed their hands and pronounced the blessings before and after the meals - customs which they held sacred and inviolable. Their religious sentiments are constantly outraged by the actions of their children, and their cup of sadness and disappointment is filled to overflowing, when, on the first Sabbath, they behold their children depart for their daily occupations. Who can measure the misery and wretchedness of the parents, strangers in a strange land, at seeing that which they regarded as dearer than life violated, voluntarily, by their own children? Many a father spent his first Sabbath in America in weeping and lamentation, many a mother turned hers into a day of mourning, a real Tisha B'ov (the ninth day of the month of Ab, the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem; the Jewish memorial day of mourning). They could not command as they would have done in their old home, for they are dependent upon their children. They cannot argue, for their arguments are met either with ridicule or with explanations of inexorable, unanswerable problems of economy which they do not understand. They can only silently weep at their misfortune and regret the day that they set foot in this tafa medina, "this unclean land."

DOCUMENT #9

BERNARD ISSACS: A MEMOIR

Inquiry Questions:

- a) Why was the United Hebrew Schools formed?
- b) Why did Issacs enter into Jewish education?
- c) Has Jewish education changed very much since the times of Issacs?

## BERNARD ISAACS

### A Memoir

by MAX WEINE

from Sefer B. Isaacs, Morris Nobel, editor (New York, 1977).

Bernard Isaacs (Dov Ber) was born on December 20, 1882 (Wednesday, the 10th of Tevet, 5643) in Pilvishki, State of Suvalk, Lithuania, to his father Abraham Mordecai and his mother Hannah Quint.

Isaacs' Jewish education was a traditional one - Heder and Yeshiva (in Kovno). But the fact that his father was a learned man whose occupation as a baker in no way interfered with the mitzvah of Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam ("The study of the Torah is a greater mitzvah than all the others combined") must have been a potent factor in his education. He often deplored the fact that the single-mindedness of his father regarding study left the burden of the bakeshop on his mother. This was a contributing factor to his lofty opinion of women and his high regard for their position in society.

When he returned to his home town he concentrated on the study of Hebrew as a language of speech and literature. He also taught individual students the Hebrew language and literature for the period of three years that he remained in his native city. His closest co-worker was Aaron David Markson. Together they founded Hebrew speaking clubs for boys and girls of various ages. He was especially anxious to involve girls in this activity because their general and Jewish education was normally neglected.

In his early twenties, in 1904, before the Russian-Japanese War, Isaacs left Russia and made his way to the United States. The circumstances of his departure make an interesting story and were told to me in the last year of his life. Like so many others, he left Russia in order to avoid military service in the army of the Czar. The entire matter was very carefully arranged. He presented himself for induction into the army. Thus, by legally being a member of the armed forces of Russia, no blame would fall upon his family, and no one would have to be asked to serve in his place. Meanwhile, very careful and detailed arrangements were made for him to leave the country without being detected.

Upon his arrival in the United States Isaacs made it his business to study the English language and to know it perfectly - not only as a spoken language but its literature as well.

Isaacs enrolled in Cooper Union as a student of general science and engineering, and received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1911 as a civil engineer. He worked at this profession for about one year in upper New York state on hydro-electric and dam projects. However, his great love for Hebrew literature and his interest in teaching the language gave him no rest. In leaving the engineering field he knew that he risked living a life of poverty, but he never regretted making Jewish education his career.

He first taught in New Rochelle, N.Y. Though he remained there for a very short time his teaching ability was recognized and remembered for years afterwards. He later accepted a position as a teacher in the then famous Uptown Talmud Torah in New York under the direction of Hillel Malachovski.

In 1912 Isaacs accepted a position as teacher in the Talmud Torah of Indianapolis, Indiana, where Louis Hurvich, one of the outstanding educators of the time, served as superintendent of the school system. On the same faculty were Aaron David Markson and Max Gordon, his life-long friends and co-workers. In the course of this period Mr. Hurvich resigned and Isaacs was asked to succeed to the superintendency.

During his period of residence in Indianapolis, Isaacs married. The bride was Belle Ruth Appelbaum of Utica, New York, and the wedding took place on June 28, 1914. It is a pity that we have no record of when and where he first met Belle, or any of the details of their decision to marry and of the early years of their marriage. She was the daughter of a rabbi, but outside of this isolated fact we know nothing about her family.

The Isaacs had two children during their residence in Indianapolis, Annette and Irving. After the family moved to Detroit two more children were born, Ruben Hillel and Emanuel.

In 1919, after seven years in Indianapolis, Isaacs was called to take over the professional leadership of the newly organized United Hebrew Schools of Detroit. What prompted the organization of this community sponsored program in Jewish education was the deplorable condition of the schools in Detroit at that time. There were several chadorim in the city, only two of which could be considered acceptable. The only institution that conducted what might be called an educational program was the Division Street Talmud Torah, at whose head stood the scholarly and dedicated Hyman Buchhalter. There were a few small congregational schools and one Reform Sunday School.

With minor exceptions the educational facilities were very poor. The buildings were old and dilapidated, and very poorly equipped as far as furnishings were concerned. The teachers had, in most cases, no training. The sexton or hazzan of a synagogue, or others who were forced by economic circumstances to become melamid, constituted the faculty. There was, for the most part, no proper class organization and curriculum. The method of instruction was the translation of the Hebrew into Yiddish. Very rarely did a child advance beyond the stage of being able to read "Ivri" and become Bar Mitzvah.

The United Hebrew Schools was a new venture in community sponsorship and community responsibility for Jewish education, and it was the type of school setup that Isaacs and his co-workers had been dreaming of and preparing for many years. The method of instruction was the natural method of Ivrit b'Ivrit which was then spreading throughout the United States in the post-World War I days. Jewish education in Detroit experienced for the first time a planned curriculum, carefully graded classes and teachers who were trained and

experienced. Joining Isaacs on the faculty were, among others, the other two members of the triumvirate, Markson and Gordon.

Some of the immediate results of the program of the United Hebrew Schools was that several congregational schools immediately asked to join this venture. Several of the chadorim that continued to operate independently began to imitate the program of the United Hebrew Schools by improving their facilities and methods of instruction.

Isaacs dedicated the remainder of his professional life to the United Hebrew Schools, and continued to hold the position of superintendent until his retirement in 1955 at the age of seventy-three. What Isaacs accomplished in those thirty-six years is not only the story of his life, but the story of a major part of the history of the Jewish community of Detroit. It was the beginning of the post-World War I period in Jewish history, the period of the Balfour Declaration and the laying of the foundations of the Jewish community of Palestine. The Hebrew language was experiencing a period of rebirth and was becoming the legitimate medium of communication among Jews not only in Palestine but in the diaspora as well. This enthusiasm spread to all parts of the Jewish world. Detroit, a growing Jewish community, was laying the foundations for future expansion. A new type of Hebrew schooling, reflecting the burgeoning life both in Palestine and in the United States, was the aim of the leaders of the Detroit community.

The first modern Hebrew School building under the direction of Isaacs was opened on Wilkins Street, and was immediately filled with 625 students. As the Jewish community grew and moved north and west, new buildings were erected. The United Hebrew Schools kept pace with the rapid growth of the community. The Wilkins Street school was followed by the Kirby Center. A new school was built in the Oakland district. Public school facilities were rented - something unheard of in those days. Somewhat later the Philadelphia - Byron building became the hub of educational and cultural activities in the Jewish community. And this process continued. At the time of the retirement of Isaacs there were eight or nine branches of the United Hebrew Schools with a total enrollment of some 2,500 students.

The first elementary school graduation took place in 1923 with a class of fourteen. This was the beginning of an uninterrupted series of graduations marking an era of growth and accomplishment. The organization of a high school department followed and had its first graduation in 1928.

So that graduation exercises should not mean the loss of potential talent in the community, and in order to provide for the future of Jewish education, Isaacs undertook the task of training teachers. There was no facility for the training of Hebrew School teachers in the city, and establishing an institution for that purpose at the time was considered unrealistic. The job had to be done by Isaacs himself. He carefully selected promising students and gave them an opportunity to observe and to teach under his personal supervision. His guidance was more fatherly than strictly professional. When the student showed signs of not only genuine interest but also of professional growth, he or she was

put in charge of small groups of children, and perhaps later of a regular class. These student teachers knew that Isaacs' door as well as his mind were always open for consultation, help, and advice. He, in turn, was both gentle and firm in his directives and the advice he gave. The result was that a number of the finest teachers of the United Hebrew Schools to this day received their inspiration and their training on the job through Isaacs.

In 1926 the schools became a constituent agency of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit. The idea of "Federation" was still rather new to the Jewish community of those years. The groundwork was very carefully laid and the negotiations conducted by Isaacs. As a matter of fact, when the proposal was first presented to the school's Board of Directors it was voted down. Isaacs was, however, confident that a number of the leaders of the community would realize the importance of a united community and unified fund raising and would support the resolution. He went about "educating" the members of his board. One of the men he saw was Fred Butzel. The latter promised his full cooperation and attended the next board meeting where the measure was to be presented over again to the school board. Butzel's leadership in the community and his favorable attitude to joining the Federation swung the other members of that body to the affirmative side, and the measure was passed unanimously. This action, incidentally, set a pattern for other communities throughout the country.

The depression years of the thirties affected the United Hebrew Schools as it did every other community agency. Salaries were slashed, but the work of the schools went on. As a matter of fact, when the Federation recommended the closing of one of the schools, and selected a school in a poor neighborhood where the income from tuition was very low, Isaacs opposed the step with all the vigor he could command. The teachers in that school even offered to teach without pay rather than have the children deprived of their Jewish education. Butzel again swung the balance in favor of Jewish education because he was impressed by this demonstration of loyalty and self-sacrifice. This influential community leader remained a lifelong friend of the United Hebrew Schools. Isaacs was the key figure in this situation, holding the love and friendship of the teachers in the cause of Jewish education and winning the loyal support of the community leaders for the cause. In later years Isaacs never tired of recalling and repeating the stories of the sacrifices that the teachers were willing to make and actually did make in their devotion to their calling. And a good deal of that was the result of personal loyalty to Isaacs, and the fact that he took the same financial cuts and risks that they were asked to take.

At that time he began to think seriously in terms of protection for the members of the teaching profession, and began inquiring about various types of insurance and pensions. In this he was a pioneer in the field of Jewish education.

Isaacs did not want the United Hebrew Schools to be only on the receiving end as far as Federation was concerned. It became a matter of established policy that faculty members be active in the Jewish community, contribute to and work for the United Jewish Campaign. This also became a responsibility of the members of the Board of Directors of the United Hebrew Schools and the members of various committees.

One of the pioneering experiments in the field of Jewish education that Isaacs worked at was the all-day school. However, the experiment was terminated after one year. Obviously the time for this type of Jewish education had not yet arrived. It must be mentioned to his credit, however, that Isaacs and the United Hebrew Schools operated the first all-day school under Jewish community auspices in Detroit. Mr. Michael Michlin, who had an M.A. degree in education, served as headmaster. (Two congregations, Beth El and Shaarey Zedek, also experimented with all day Jewish education.)

Among the important adjuncts of the United Hebrew Schools were the Women's Auxiliary and the Alumni Association. The former group undertook as its responsibility the provision of buses for the transportation of children to the schools from outlying neighborhoods, and of scholarships for needy children. It is worth noting that the busing of children was another pioneering effort of the United Hebrew Schools. The Auxiliary also inaugurated a series of cultural programs.

The Alumni Association, organized in 1923, served as another arm of the United Hebrew Schools. It published its own Hebrew journal and conducted its activities with the United Hebrew Schools as its special responsibility. Among its members were many of the leaders of the Detroit Jewish community to this day.

Closer to the literary interests of Isaacs was the Kvutzah Ivrit (Hebrew Cultural Society), organized in the thirties for the promotion of Hebrew culture in all of its aspects. The Kvutzah Ivrit published over a period of many years the Med HaKvutzah (Echo of the Kvutzah), a Hebrew literary organ that appeared annually under the editorship of Isaacs, Morris Nobel, Meyer Mathis, and Aaron Tabai, the latter two now deceased. The publication, aided by the loyal cooperation of the members of the group, grew in size and importance with the passing of the years. In it appeared, in addition to stories by Isaacs, articles by faculty members and other Hebraists, both local and national. The meetings of the Kvutzah Ivrit were the Hebrew cultural events of the Jewish community. On its platform appeared many of the leading Hebrew writers of the world who visited this country from time to time.

In the midst of a busy life as educator and added involvement in the affairs of the Jewish community, Isaacs found time to write and publish. His interest in writing developed when he was still in Pilvishki. It was at that time that he first sent sketches to a Warsaw newspaper about life in a small Lithuanian town - a favorite theme of Isaacs throughout his writing career. The first story he published after his arrival in the United States appeared in 1909. After settling in this country an additional theme of Isaacs was the transition from Eastern Europe to the United States with the accompanying problems of adjustment and acculturation.

— — This continued almost up to the last few days of his life. When the High Holy Days of 1975 came, New Year greeting cards were sent out to his friends as usual, but for the first time the signature was not in his handwriting. Shortly afterwards he caught cold and was taken to the hospital because of his weakened state. He passed away shortly after being admitted, on October 5, 1975, with a minimum of suffering. It was truly a Mitat Neshikah, "death with a kiss." An era had ended.

DOCUMENT #10

A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH WELFARE FEDERATION IN DETROIT  
by IRVING I. KATZ

Inquiry Question:

- a) What institutions were created to help the Eastern European immigrant?
- b) Why was a single charity agency necessary?
- c) When was the United Palestine Appeal organized? What happened to the money that the American Jewish Community was raising?
- d) Why was Sinai Hospital established in 1953?
- e) How has the Federation changed its role since 1899?

# HIGHLIGHTS IN OUR 60 YEAR HISTORY

By IRVING I. KATZ  
*Michigan's Jewish Historiographer*

## 1850-1899

Chapman Abraham, a Jew, was a resident of Detroit as early as 1762, and other individual Jews resided here in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries. But, it was not until 1850, during the period of Jewish immigration from Germany, that Detroit had the traditionally required Minyan to form its first synagogue, today's Temple Beth El. The city had then a population of 21,019, which included twelve Jewish families. By the end of the century, following the exodus of the Jews from Russia, Detroit's Jewish community increased to 5,000, in a population of about 300,000.

There were six synagogues in the city in 1899: one Reform, Beth El; five Orthodox, Shaarey Zedek (now Conservative), B'nai Israel, Beth Jacob, Beth Abraham and Beth David (now B'nai David). Rabbi Leo M. Franklin had just assumed the pulpit at Temple Beth El and Rabbi Judah L. Levin was the spiritual leader of Congregations Shaarey Zedek, B'nai Israel and Beth Jacob.

The Jewish community was concentrated near the downtown area: Temple Beth El, located at Washington Avenue (now Washington Boulevard) and Clifford; Shaarey Zedek at Congress and St. Antoine; B'nai Israel on Mullet Street and Beth Jacob at Hastings and Montcalm. The work of

Jewish charities was carried on by the synagogues and the following philanthropic societies: Ladies' Society for the Support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans in the State of Michigan, organized by Rabbi Abraham Lasar of Temple Beth El in 1863, during the Civil War; Beth El Hebrew Relief Society, originally organized in 1869 as the Gentlemen's Hebrew Relief Society by Temple Beth El and Congregation Shaarey Zedek; Hebrew Ladies'

Sewing Society, organized by Simon Heavenrich in 1882 to assist Jewish Refugees from Russia; Self Help Circle, organized by Mrs. Adolph Krolak in 1889 to assist the children of Jewish refugees from Russia; Jewish Relief Society, organized by Congregation Shaarey Zedek in 1892; the Hebrew Benevolent Society; Gemiluth Chasodim Society, organized by East European Jews in 1895, now known as the Hebrew Free Loan Association, a member agency of the Jewish Welfare Federation; Assembly of David and House of Shelter, organized in 1897 by East European Jews, now the Jewish House of Shelter, a member agency of the Jewish Welfare Federation.

Jewish children received their religious education in the Talmud Torah Institute, a communal afternoon Hebrew school organized in 1897 and known for many years as the Division Street Talmud Torah, the Sunday School of the Talmud Torah Institute; the Sunday School of Temple Beth El; private chadorim (Hebrew schools) and private Hebrew teachers.

The following Jewish fraternal lodges were in existence: Pishah Lodge No. 34 of the Independent Order B'nai B'rith; Montefiore Lodge No. 12 of the Order Free Sons of Israel; Michigan Lodge No. 111 of the Order Brith Abraham; Detroit Lodge No. 386 of the Independent Order Brith Abraham; Aaron Lodge No. 132 and Detroit Lodge No. 97 of the Independent Order Sons of Benjamin; Nathan Lodge No. 125 of the Order Keshet Shel Barzel; and Detroit Lodge No. 55 of the Knights of Pythias.

There was one Mutual Benefit Society, the Hebrew Protective Association.

These literary and social clubs were functioning: The Jewish Woman's Club, now the Detroit Section of the National Council of Jewish Women; Philomatic Debating Club; Fellowship Club; Montefiore Club; Phoenix Club and Standard Club.

The Young Men's Hebrew Association was organized in 1891, to serve the needs of the younger members of the community.

The Jewish community of Detroit was growing at a rapid pace, because of the continuous arrival of immigrants from Russia. The problems of adjustment and relief grew correspondingly. The young rabbi of Temple Beth El, Leo M. Franklin, surveyed the situation of Jewish philanthropy in Detroit and described it as follows: "For years the work of Jewish philanthropy has been carried on in this city by a half dozen or more societies, each of which did its work thoroughly and conscientiously, but despite the most careful supervision, it was found impossible to avoid duplication and imposition. Refused at the door of one institution, the mendicant would go unabashed to the next, and if there turned away, a third and a fourth place were waiting to receive him."

It was not an easy task to persuade the various philanthropic societies to unite their efforts but Rabbi Franklin persevered in his mission.

*Detroit was due for a change in its philanthropic endeavors.*



RABBI LEO M. FRANKLIN  
*photo taken at time of his arrival in Detroit*

# OF JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES...

1899-1926

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

1899—Representatives of Beth El Hebrew Relief Society, Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society, Self Help Circle and Jewish Relief Society met and established, on November 21st, the UNITED JEWISH CHARITIES, Detroit's first central Jewish philanthropic organization. Its purpose was to expedite the charitable and educational work undertaken by existing organizations, and to reduce the expense incurred by these societies in their individual practice of philanthropy.

*Detroit Tuesday Eve Nov 7-1899*

*In pursuance of a call issued by a Committee appointed by the Beth El Hebrew Relief Society to the various Jewish Philanthropic Organizations of this City, a meeting was held this evening in the study rooms of Temple Beth El, with the following Societies represented*

- Ladies Sewing Society*
- Jewish Relief Society*
- Self help Circle*
- Beth El Hebrew Relief Society*

*upon motion, Mr. Mordecai Rutzel was elected chairman, and Mr. Alfred Roth, Child, Secretary.*

*Dr. Franklin as chairman of the Committee representing the Beth El Hebrew Relief Society, reported, that the following letter had been sent to all the Jewish Charitable Organizations of this City, and which had given birth to this evening's meeting.*

- At a meeting of the Beth El Hebrew Relief Society, the undersigned Committee was appointed to secure the Co-operation of all other Jewish Philanthropic organizations in the City for the formation of a joint association by which all charitable and educational work now being done by our various Societies may be more expeditiously and less expensively accomplished.*
- It may be said, that according to the plan of organization proposed*

*Above is a reproduction of the first page of the minutes written at the meeting organizing the United Jewish Charities*

UJC established its first headquarters in a house donated by Nathan S. Ginsburg at Brush and Campbell Streets.

1900—A free dispensary was opened, forerunner of the North End Clinic, now the Shiffman Clinic Wing at Sinai Hospital.

UJC gave its first support to Jewish education by granting permission to Division Street Talmud Torah to use its meeting rooms on Sunday mornings.

UJC made its first allocation to the House of Shelter.

Boys' Self Help School became affiliated with UJC.

UJC became a member of the National Conference of Jewish Charities, now the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service.

First Annual Meeting held on October 31. Reports presented by David W. Simons, president of the United Jewish Charities; Mrs. Sarah Berger, president of the Hebrew Ladies' Sewing society; Mrs. Blanche H. Rothschild, president of the Self Help Circle; Rabbi Leo M. Franklin, chairman of the Employment Bureau; Dr. Louis J. Hirschman, physician; Abraham Benjamin, secretary; and Emanuel H. Van Baalen, treasurer. It was reported at the meeting that during the year—247 contributors gave \$3,647.50 Highest contributor of \$115 was Nathan S. Ginsburg. Contributors of \$100 each, were Bernard Ginsburg, Sigmund Rothschild, David W. Simons and Seigman Schloss.

1901—Movement initiated to build a Jewish hospital. This interest in a Jewish hospital continued almost uninterruptedly for the next half century and resulted in the building of Sinai Hospital.

1902—Fresh Air Society established.

Second Biennial Convention of Jewish Charities in the United States held in Detroit.

1903—Hannah Schloss Memorial Building on East High Street (now East Vernor Highway) dedicated as headquarters of UJC.

Ida E. Ginsburg Day Nursery opened in Schloss Building.

Program conducted in Schloss Building included reading, arithmetic, art, civics, sewing lessons for girls, physical culture, dancing, lessons in piano, stenography and American History. Manual Training classes were conducted for boys.

1904—A branch of the Industrial Removal Office, a national program financed by the Bureau of Jewish Funds to resettle immigrant Jews from the East to the Middle and Far Western states, was established.

served as an employment bureau. In 1908, the Industrial Removal Office in New York reported that it had sent 408 families from New York to Detroit, which represented the second largest number sent to any city. The Detroit Office existed until 1914.

Principle of Welfare Fund established. The board of UJC voted to concentrate into one collection effort all appeals for the various charitable organizations endorsed by UJC. Out-of-town agencies included for the first time as beneficiaries of the single local collection.



Joseph H.  
Wertheimer  
•  
First  
Superintendent  
of  
UJC  
1900-1901



Seligman  
Schloss  
•  
Hannah Schloss  
Building  
•  
memorial to  
his wife

1905—Blanche J. Hart, Superintendent of UJC from 1903 to 1923, appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Visiting Nurses Association.

1906—UJC started Jewish Foster Home Care.

1907—Jewish Old Folks' Home (Anshe Chesed Shel Emeth), initiated in 1905, was incorporated; now the Jewish Home for Aged.

1908—A new wing was added to the Schloss Building and the combined structure named "The Jewish Institute," forerunner of the Jewish Community Center. Institute building occupied until 1925.

1909—Detroit Public Library opened a branch in the Jewish Institute.

1910—UJC appointed a representative on the Central Council of the Associated Charities of Detroit for the purpose of coordinating child care service.

1911—Fresh Air Society acquired camp site on lake St. Clair.

1914—UJC established an Executives' Social Club for the purpose of planning a program for the unemployed.

Hebrew Hospital Association, organized in 1913, raised \$8,000 for a Jewish hospital.

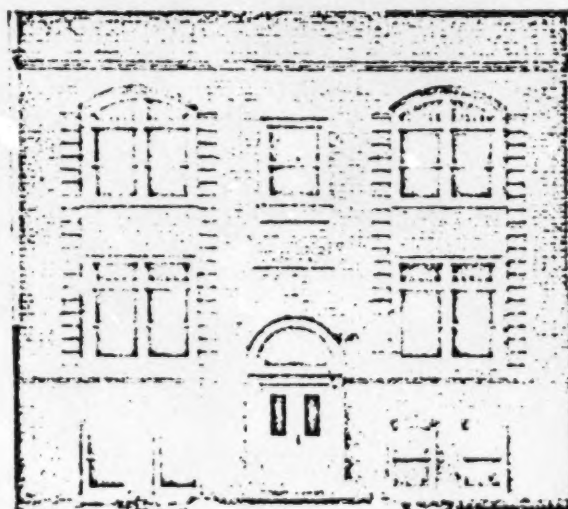
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, known as JDC, established.

Blanche J. Hart called the attention of the Board of UJC to the fact that UJC, as the coordinating and supervising agency for the collection and disbursement of funds for charitable purposes, was too limited to admit a broad program of social service within its pattern of activities. She pointed to a steadily increasing Jewish group which could not be interested and served effectively by an organization whose primary purpose was to raise and distribute moneys only for charity. *She recommended the formation of an all-inclusive federation which would promote the social and cultural welfare of the Jewish community, along with its responsibility as the central fund-raising organ.*

1916 Jewish Free Burial Association (Chesed Shel Emes), now the Hebrew Benevolent Association, organized to provide funerals and burials to needy persons, according to Jewish tradition and custom, either totally free of charge or for a nominal contribution.

1917—UJC became a member of the newly formed Community Union or Council of Social Agencies.

Eighteenth Annual Report listed the following as the constituents of UJC: Beth El Relief Society, Jewish Relief Society, Self Help Circle, School for Immigrants, Boys' Self Help School, Ida E. Ginsburg Day Nursery, Fresh



The Hannah Schloss Building—Dedicated 1903

Air Department, Free Employment Bureau, Legal Aid Bureau, Gymnasium, Women's Work Room, Clinic, and Immigrant Aid Department.

Jewish Welfare Board, now National Jewish Welfare Board, established.

1918—Detroit Patriotic War Fund organized for centralized war relief work. UJC joined Patriotic Fund and suspended its own fund-raising activities to cooperate with the Fund.

Detroit Hebrew Orphan Home established.

1919—UJC established a dental clinic in conjunction with its general clinic.

UJC opened Music School.

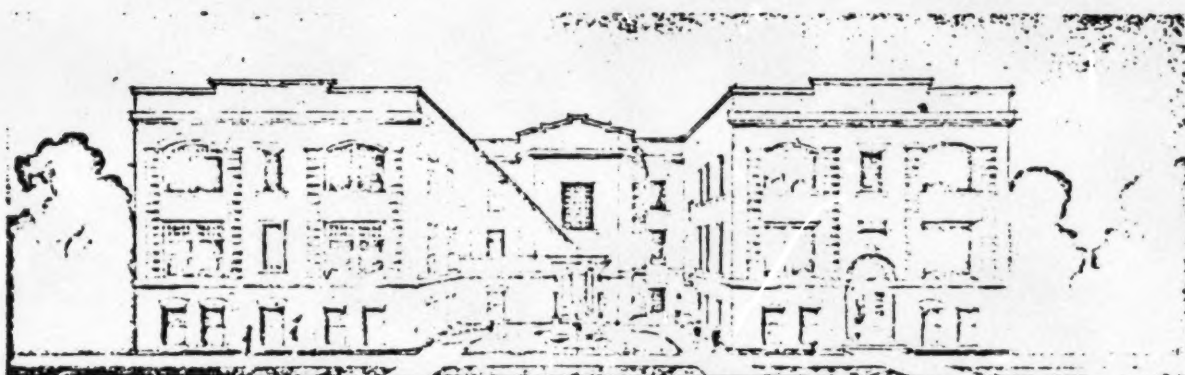
Wilkins Street Talmud Torah opened, merging following year with the Division Street Talmud Torah, and the combined schools named the United Hebrew Schools. Today the United Hebrew Schools, with its headquarters at the Esther Berman Branch, conducts 8 branches with an enrollment of over 3,000 children, the Hebrew High School and Midrasha, College of Jewish Studies in the Kasse Building.

1920—The budget of the Jewish Widows' Aid Society, originally the Ladies' Society for the Support of Hebrew Widows and Orphans in the State of Michigan, organized in 1863, included in UJC. Jewish Widows' Aid Society existed until 1927.

UJC approved representation on its Executive Board from the Hebrew Free Loan Association, House of Shelter, Jewish Old Folks' Home, Bicur Cholim, Bicur Cholim, Jrs., Chesed Shel Emeth and Chevrah Kadishah "with the idea in view that, having direct representation, a spirit of better cooperation will grow up with existing Jewish philanthropic organizations."

Young Women's Hebrew Association organized by the Jewish Women's Club, now the Detroit Section of the National Council of Jewish Women.

*Pictured below is the enlarged  
Hannah Schloss Memorial Building*



The home of the UNITED JEWISH CHARITIES—"The Jewish Institute"—dedicated December 1901



Division Street Talmud Torah

1922—North End Community Clinic opened on Westminster and Delmar.

607 Jewish subscribers of \$25 and over contributed a total of \$177,896 to the Community Fund Drive.

Victory Conference and Testimonial to David A. Brown held in Detroit, celebrating the success under his leadership of the national appeal for \$14,000,000 for war stricken Jews of Europe and Palestine.

1923—UJC Family Welfare Department formed a Mental Hygiene Clinic, in cooperation with the University of Michigan Psychopathic Hospital, first private Mental Hygiene Clinic in Detroit.

Detroit Hebrew Infants' Orphan Home opened.

First comprehensive survey of the Jewish community of Detroit conducted by the National Bureau of Jewish Social Research. The purpose of the survey was "to bring forth

facts which would make advisable the elimination or merger of certain existing organizations and to point out new fields of endeavor not yet touched by the Jewish community." The Survey Report, a document of great historical significance, had a profound effect on the future of our Jewish community. Apart from the valuable information disclosed by this study in the various fields of Jewish community activity, the survey strengthened a desire, already felt in many quarters for a more efficient organization of the community forces and a general improvement of service. For the next three years the UJC was undergoing re-organization which resulted in the establishment of the Jewish Welfare Federation. The Jewish population of Detroit was estimated at 40,000.



**Blanche J. Hart**  
Superintendent,  
United Jewish Charities,  
1903-23



**Morris D. Waldman**  
Executive Director,  
United Jewish Charities,  
1924-26  
1st Executive Director,  
Jewish Welfare Federation,  
1926-28

1925—Morris D. Waldman, successor to Blanche J. Hart, analyzed the state of affairs of the Detroit Jewish community as follows: "The following community organizations were functioning at the time: The United Jewish Charities, engaged in family welfare work and recreational and educational work; The Young Women's Hebrew Association, which occupied a remodeled old private residence with limited room; Fresh Air Society which conducted a summer camp for children on the shores of Lake St. Clair, about fifteen miles out of town in a rather congested neighborhood of summer cottages, and operated a small, over-crowded clinic in the Jewish section known as Oakland; and a Hebrew Free Loan Association with a revolving fund of about \$15,000. These organizations were independently affiliated with the Detroit Community Fund receiving

an aggregate of about \$130,000. There were also a number of Jewish organizations being supported by the Jewish public through independent appeals..."

"The problems confronting the Jewish community of Detroit are those presented in every unorganized or only partly organized community: competitive fund-raising and little community planning."

Mr. Waldman proposed the creation of a federation and submitted the following plan which was approved by UJC: all local philanthropic agencies were to be invited to join a new federation which would be largely a fund-raising and community planning organization, whose member agencies were each to remain autonomous and to render specific functional services to the community. *This master plan became the basis for the Jewish Welfare Federation when it was organized the following year.*

Jewish Social Service Bureau, now Jewish Family and Children's Service, established.

A camp on Lake Huron, near Jeddo, Michigan, opened by Young Women's Hebrew Association, later the Council Camp, sponsored by the Detroit Section of the National Council of Jewish Women.

United Jewish Emergency Fund Drive for \$150,000 conducted to aid stranded Jewish refugees, ORT reconstruction work in Europe, United Hebrew Schools, Young Women's Hebrew Association, Hebrew Free Loan Association and Jewish Chautaugua Society.

Fresh Air Society received a gift from the E. M. Rosenthal family of a camp site on Blaine Lake, near Brighton, Michigan, which became known as the Fresh Air Camp.



Children at Fresh Air Camp—1926

## 1926-1959

**1926—Jewish Centers Association organized.**

**Free Employment Bureau** opened by Young Women's Hebrew Association.

**Detroit Service Group**, an outgrowth of the Service Group organized in 1925 to help with the United Jewish Emergency Fund Campaign, established.

**Women's Auxiliary of Detroit Service Group** started, which in 1939 became the Women's Division of the Detroit Service Group and in 1946 the Women's Division of the Jewish Welfare Federation.

**North End Clinic** moved into its new Leopold Wineman Memorial Building on Holbrook.

**JEWISH WELFARE FEDERATION** established on October 15th. Incorporating agencies were: United Jewish Charities, Fresh Air Society, Jewish Centers Association, Jewish Social Service Bureau, North End Clinic, United Hebrew Schools, Hebrew Free Loan Association, United Jewish Campaign and Detroit Service Group.

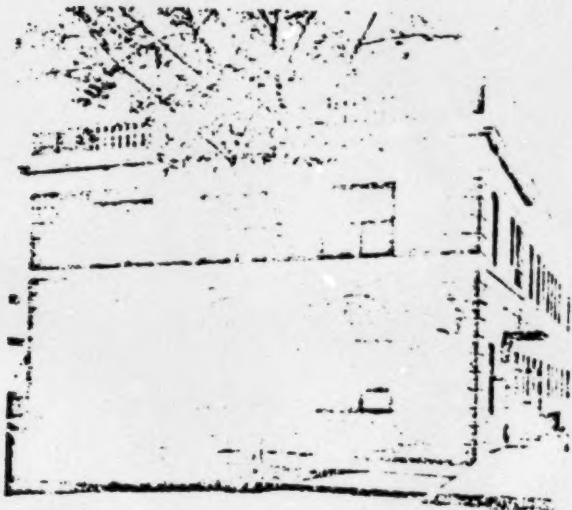
**United Jewish Campaign** (name changed in 1930 to Allied Jewish Campaign) raised \$738,242 for a three year period.

**1927—Big Brother work** started.

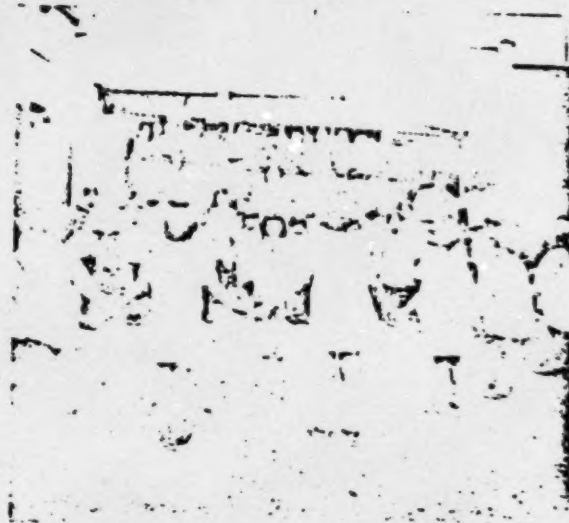
**1928—Camp Chelsea** (Ginsburg Camp for mothers and babies) opened.

**1929—Jewish Child Placement Bureau** established.

**1930—Detroit Hebrew Orphan Home** and **Detroit Hebrew Infants' Orphan Home** merged to form the **Jewish Children's Home** which opened in 1931 on Burlingame and functioned until 1941.



North End Clinic—Leopold Wineman Memorial—1927

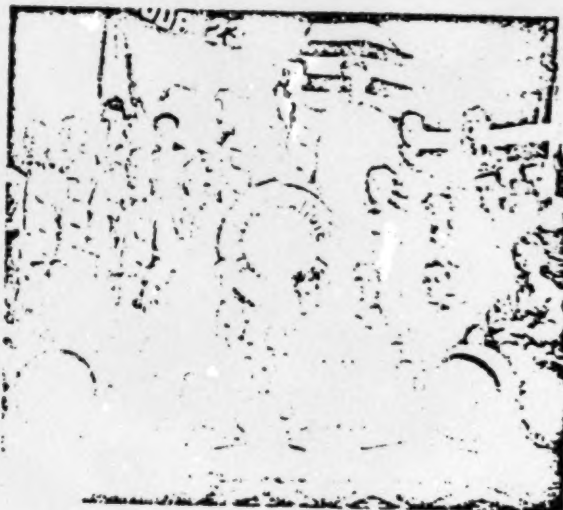


Children at play—United Hebrew Schools

**1931—Jewish Unemployment Emergency Council** formed to deal with the problem of mass unemployment and relief cases. Functioned as a department of J.S.S.B. until 1937.

**1932—Federation** became affiliated with the newly established Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

**1933—To investigate cases and to coordinate the work of the Jewish Child Placement Bureau and Jewish Children's Home**, J.S.S.B. established a Joint Committee



Boy Scout Troop 23—Jewish Institute

on Child Care which functioned until 1944.

J.S.S.B. and Detroit Section of the National Council of Jewish Women set up a Big Sister Program, discontinued in 1947.

Jewish Centers Association and Young Women's Hebrew Association merged to form Jewish Community Center.

Jewish Community Center building on Woodward and Holbrook dedicated.



Jewish Community Center—1933

1934—Cooperative Council of Jewish Family Welfare Department established to coordinate the work of relief societies, later sponsored by League of Jewish Women's Organizations.

1936—League for Human Rights established to combat Nazi activity in Detroit.

Trade Council established by Allied Jewish Campaign.

House of Shelter moved to its present home on Taylor Avenue.

Sholem Aleichem School, Jewish Folk Schools and Workmen's Circle Schools first included in Allied Jewish Campaign.

United Palestine Appeal (now United Israel Appeal) established.

1937—Jewish Home for Aged moved to its present home on Petoskey. In 1946, the Jewish Children's Home became an annex to the Jewish Home for Aged and is now known as the Sidney J. Allen Infirmary. In 1956, the Frieda G. and David M. LeVine Annex was dedicated.

Jewish Community Council established, now the Jewish Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit with a constituency of some 340 organizations.

Resettlement Service organized to deal with refugee needs.

United Jewish Hospital Committee formed by Hebrew Hospital Association, Detroit Jewish Hospital Association, Mt. Sinai Hospital Association, Maimonides Medical Society, Phi Delta Epsilon Medical Fraternity, Alpha Omega Dental Fraternity and Aesculapian Pharmaceutical Society, which was preceded in 1936 by the organization of the Jewish Physicians' Hospital Committee.

1938—Federation sponsored Hospital Survey.

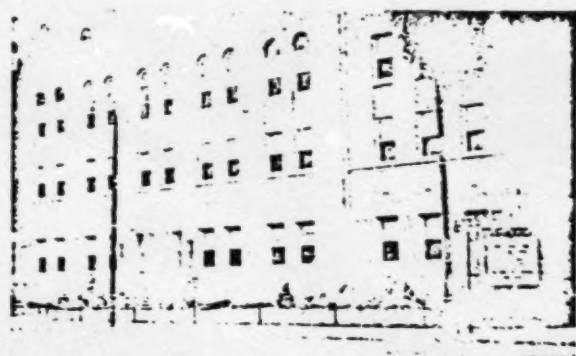
Detroit Junior Service Group established.

Yeshivath Beth Yehudah included for first time in Allied Jewish Campaign.

1939—Aaron DeRoy Memorial Building of the Jewish Community Center on Woodward and Holbrook dedicated.

National Refugee Service established.

United Jewish Appeal (U.J.A.) established in behalf of the Joint Distribution Committee, the United Palestine Appeal (now the United Israel Appeal) and National Refugee Service (now United Service for New Americans).



Aaron DeRoy Memorial Building—dedicated 1939

1940—Federation published S. D. Wineberg's book, in Yiddish, on "Jewish Social Services in Detroit," first and only book in Yiddish on Federation and its Agencies.

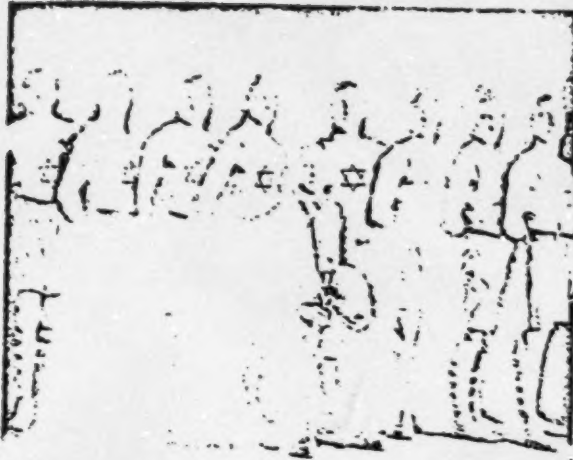
1941—Jewish Old Age Bureau established with the participation of the Jewish Welfare Federation, Jewish Social Service Bureau, North End Clinic, Jewish Home for Aged, and Jewish Community Center.

Jewish Children's Bureau established through the merger of the Jewish Child Placement Bureau and the Jewish Children's Home.

Jewish Vocational Service, started in 1940, incorporated. Was successor to the Free Employment Bureau started by Y.W.H.A in 1926 which was continued by Jewish Community Center.

1943—Allied Jewish Campaign suspended to become a partner in the Greater Detroit War Chest.

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1913 Basketball Team at YMHA. Gus D. Newman, president, Jewish Home for Aged is at extreme right.

1944—Jewish Children's Bureau consolidated with J.S.S.B. as its Children's Department.

Jewish Hospital Association formed by Federation. Raised \$2,300,000.

Detroit self-study of cultural-recreational-educational resources and needs of the Jewish community initiated by Federation.

1946—Allied Jewish Campaign resumed its own fund-raising.

1947—Twelfth Street Council Center sponsored by Jewish Community Center and Detroit Section of the National Council of Jewish Women.

Committee on Jewish Scholarship Service established by Federation.



Jewish Home for Aged on Brush and Edmund Place

1948—Greater Detroit Hospital Fund created which included an allocation of \$2,500,000 for Sinai Hospital. Budget and Planning Divisions of Federation established.

1949—Professional Staff Institute for member agencies of the Jewish Welfare Federation initiated.

1950—Dexter-Davison Branch of the Jewish Community Center dedicated.

Pre-Campaign Budget Conference initiated by Federation, which served as a model for other communities.

Camp Tamarack at Ortonville, Michigan, a site of over 700 acres, acquired.

1951—Fred M. Butzel Memorial Association purchased the building at 163 Madison Avenue, which was dedicated in 1952 as the Fred M. Butzel Memorial Building, housing the Jewish Welfare Federation and some of its agencies.



Sinai Hospital—opened 1953

1953—Sinai Hospital on Outer Drive, a long cherished dream of the Jewish Community, opened. January 15th, first patient admitted.

Community Workshop, an outgrowth of the Jewish Vocational Service, established.

1956—Shapiro School of Nursing, contributed by Nate S. and Ruth B. Shapiro Foundation and the Cunningham Foundation, opened at Sinai Hospital.

Ten Mile Road Building, housing a branch of the Jewish Community Center and a branch of the United Hebrew Schools, opened.

1957—Allied Jewish Campaign raised \$5,916,843 from 26,000 contributors, the highest amount raised in a single year in the history of the Detroit Jewish Community.

1959—Harry and Katy Slatkin Apartment Residence for Nurses opened at Sinai Hospital.

Shiffman Clinic Wing, successor to North End Clinic, opened at Sinai Hospital with major gifts by Shiffman Foundation and Metropolitan Detroit Building Fund.

Jewish Community Center and Jewish Family and Children's Service open new building at Meyers and Curtis.